Margaret Sikking McGar
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PARIS SALONS, CAFÉS, STUDIOS

PAINTER AND MODELS IN LA ROTONDE

La Rotonde is a Montparnasse *café* whose walls are covered by canvases

Photograph by Wyndham

PARIS SALONS CAFÉS, STUDIOS

BY SISLEY HUDDLESTON

BEING SOCIAL, ARTISTIC AND LITERARY MEMORIES

BLUE RIBBON BOOKS
NEW YORK

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EPISTLE DEDICATORY

To: W. L. Warden, Esq.

My dear Warden,

You were my earliest friend in Paris; and our friendship of many years has never faltered. We have sat together as in a stage-box to witness a thousand unhappy and happy scenes. Our personal fortunes followed the curve of those dreadful Paris days when only all-absorbing duties kept the civilised world from despair; and swung in sympathy with the renewal of cheerful activities which made Paris herself again after the war. The story of those times has yet to be told. Here I simply propose to peep into a few Paris cafés, studios, and salons, and to gossip about some of the famous writers, artists, and social personages with whom we have rubbed shoulders. Politicians and diplomatists whom we have known —perhaps too well—are barred from this book. Nor do I enter that vivid journalistic city with whose ways I am so familiar. On the threshold of the theatre, despite constant attendance at first nights, I stop. Indeed it is surprising how much must be left out; but in selecting the material for the present Parisian Nights Entertainments I have remembered many things which you too remember; and since, like Scheherazade, I must go on story-telling, there is a long vista of other Parisian Nights Entertainments ahead. Here at least are scores of men and women, drawn from life—Anatole France and Maurice Barrès, Paul Valéry and André Gide, Marcel Proust and Georges Courteline, Mme. Curie, the Comtesse de Noailles, Sarah Bernhardt, André Maurois, Tristan Bernard, Henri Béraud, Rachilde and Réjane, Robert de Flers, Paul Morand, Francis Carco, Loïe Fuller, Isadora Duncan. There are painters and sculptors—Claude Monet, Lhôte, Matisse, Picasso, Utrillo, Van Dongen, Bourdelle, Rodin. . . . There are English and American writers who have lived in Paris for longer or shorter periods—James Joyce, Sherwood Anderson, Hilaire Belloc, Sinclair Lewis, Ford Madox Ford, Theodore Dreiser, Richard Le Gallienne, Ernest Hemingway, Ludwig Lewisohn, Frank Harris, George Moore, Gertrude Stein, Ezra Pound . . . But I am drawing up a mere catalogue of names; and thus giving you a wrong impression of this volume of swift portraits and of revealing anecdotes which will help to show the variegated cosmopolitan Paris we have watched—a curious kaleidoscopic Paris that has changed its morals and its manners in this our Cocktail Epoch. For what it is worth, I would dedicate to you, in grateful remembrance of many kindnesses, my Cityful of Celebrities.

Yours sincerely,

SISLEY HUDDLESTON

Paris

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PARIS SALONS, CAFÉS, STUDIOS

Chapter I

A COCKTAIL EPOCH

Like my friend Henri Béraud, the most vigorous of French writers, I have passed the midmost of this our mortal life and begin to regret the familiar features of the past. Many busy and not unsuccessful years have been spent in Paris in the company of artists and authors, Ministers and Ambassadors, actors and journalists, and social personages of all kinds, Bohemian and Academic; and I have a wealth of memories. It is impossible to set down even a tithe of them here; but at least I propose to make a beginning with a few random observations that may be found entertaining.

First let me recall the extraordinary changes of recent years. The heartiest laughter is always aroused in the Paris cinema which had the original idea of resurrecting pre-war films. How comic were these shoulder-of-mutton sleeves, these bustles, these skirts which trailed along the ground, these coiffures of long hair heaped in mountainous structures, these frock-coats and tall shining hats! We had looked on them less than two decades ago, and had not found them comic. But now they seem incredible. It may be that in another decade the skirts which uncover the knees—the "freedom of the knees" was a catchword even at the Peace Conference—much more boldly than the old dresses uncovered the ankles, and the shingled heads, and the comfortable clothes of the men, will appear just as comic. Whatever is outmoded is absurd.

What a lot has disappeared in the past few years! When we were poor but young we lunched and dined in the Latin Quarter for 1 franc 25 centimes, with coffee and wine; and excellent the fare was. But now . . . you can hardly have a coffee for that price, while a moderate bottle of wine runs from 20 to 40 francs in these days of the vie chère. Where are the fiacres, open carriage drawn by sorry nags, and driven by cochers with red waistcoats and glazed hats? A few survivors emerge at night, but for the most part they have been swept off the streets by hordes of rapid taxicabs, blue and yellow and red, which the harassed traffic policemen vainly attempt to control. The pedestrian must obey rules in crossing the perilous thoroughfares or he will be severely punished by the courts.

This change alone has completely altered the physiognomy of the boulevards.

Where are the boulevardiers who sauntered from the Opéra to the Gymnase? These idle men-about-town, who exchanged the latest gossip in famous cafés, and affected elegance and wit, are sadly submerged by the flood of hurrying folk who are on business bent. They are homeless on these boulevards of gorgeous shop-fronts and blinding lights. No longer can they attract attention by their gentlemanly quarrels which ended in duels. Duelling is taboo. The war, with its killing on an immense scale, made the private combats at dawn in remote corners of the woods appear futile. The other day Pierre Veber, the Vaudevilliste of the old school, challenged Maurice Rostand, who like his father Edmond Rostand is a poet-dramatist, to a duel because he felt offended at some slighting remarks. In the old days Rostand could not have refused. He would have been dishonoured if he had shrunk from the invitation to "pistols—or swords—for two and coffee for one." That sentiment of "honour" is remote. Rostand laughed and told Veber not to be silly; and everybody applauded him.

Where are the hurdy-gurdy organs which used to be played in every courtyard? They have vanished with the duel and the fiacre. Where are the quadrilles and the cancan, danced with a dazzling display of froufrous at the Mabille and the Tabarin? Where are La Goulue and Nini Patte-en-l'Air, and the Môme Fromage, and Valentin-le-Désossé, and others of whom old Parisians still speak with affection? Most of them are dead long ago, and La Goulue was last seen in a miserable travelling menagerie. Nobody cares to see the flutter of frilly lace and the swirl of tempestuous linen. The nude has replaced the agitation of petticoats, and negro jazz and tangoes from South American houses of ill-fame have triumphed over the waltz and polka. A hundred of the lowest and the most fashionable haunts of Montmartre and the Champs-Elysées are alive from noon to night with champagne and dancing parties.

Where are the Tziganes, those brightly clad musicians who captured the hearts of the ladies? One of them—Rigo—ran away with an authentic Princess—the Princesse de Caraman-Chimay—who had fallen in love with his fine moustaches and his red braided coat. Now the Tziganes have gone; and in their place are Russian balalaikaists and knife-throwers.

It would have been unseemly to have spoken of gigolos; but now the Paris Prefect of Police has officially recognised the new profession in that he has ordered the professional male

dancers to report as ordinary workers. Fabulous stories are told of these sleek-haired, wasp-waisted young men who earn, in certain resorts, large fees for carrying foolish old ladies up and down the dancing floor—and for permitting themselves to be admired and petted.

For if the mode has sent into oblivion the *belle femme* of pre-war days, who was shapely and well-rounded, and has ordained that women shall be slim and without the rotundities which were formerly accounted charms, it has also sent into oblivion the square-shouldered, heavy-moustached man. We are all—that is to say, all except those who like myself are recalcitrant—slender and clean-shaven nowadays. We are all—again I except myself—wooed nowadays instead of wooing; and as I have indicated, there is a class of professional male beauty who was unheard of before the war.

The rôles are reversed. Modesty, in the smart set, is no more.

As is inevitable, with the breaking down of barriers, and Freudism, and plain-speaking, and self-indulgence which resembles the decadence of Rome, there is a confusion of sexes; and notorious public balls are organized where men dance with partners who, in spite of their attire, and their paint and powder, and their finicking manners, are of the masculine gender; while there are bars reserved for women who seek the intimate company of women. Nobody thinks of hiding these things, or of keeping them out of polite conversation.

Georges-Anquetil in a series of powerful pamphlets has scathingly exposed these perversities, but nobody appears to care. Indeed it is wrong to speak of exposure when the secret is an open one. As for the orgies in the Bois de Boulogne, they have been routed out by the police; but automobiles still take men and women of various classes to outdoor rendezvous—partouzes they are termed—beyond the city gates.

We have seen the picturesque red trousers of the French soldier, sung by Polin, replaced by neat blue uniforms; and the great popular review of troops on July Fourteenth (celebrated by Paulus in "En Rev'nant d'la R'vue") is a shadow of its former self.

And that reminds me of the decline of the café-concerts and cabarets in which such old-timers as Yvette Guilbert, green frock and blue gloves, Aristide Bruant, red muffler, velvet suit, high boots and sombrero, Mayol, large flaxen curl on forehead, lilies of the valley in buttonhole, Dranem, check suit and little bonnet, and a host of others I have known excelled. Some of them have gone the way of all flesh. Others are carrying on,

though they have changed their *genre*, but the old-style music-hall given up to songs has made way for the variety hall. There are, of course, plenty of public favourites such as Mistinguett, Spinelly, and Maurice Chevalier, but they are altogether different. There have sprung up since the war four or five big music-halls of the modern English and American type—the Palace, the Moulin Rouge, the Empire, etc., to supplement the Folies-Bergère and the Casino de Paris.

There have, further, been introduced or developed in Paris, underground railways instead of the horse-omnibus which existed just before the war, Cubist and other queer paintings instead of the well-worn mythological and anecdotal paintings, typewriters, Bolshevism, football, boxing (in which Georges Carpentier pointed the way) tennis (which Suzanne Lenglen vastly encouraged) one-way streets, gramophones, coloured photography, cinemas, illuminated skysigns including the gigantic advertising column of the Eiffel Tower, night-haunts, cocaine, silk stockings and chemises, safety razors, barred cheques, beauty-parlours sometimes run by singers and actresses such as Lina Cavalieri, Ganna Walska, Fanny Ward, monkey glands for rejuvenation as imagined by Dr. Voronoff, Freudism, quick and painless divorces for American visitors, English-language newspapers, books and plays about unnatural vices, golf, wireless telegraphy and telephony by which first-class concerts can be heard in every house, Citroën motor-cars, aeroplanes, and cocktails. . . .

Cocktails! That is the real discovery of our age. Van Dongen, the most Parisian of Dutch painters, whom I remember as a struggling not to say starving artist in Montparnasse, but who has now become a rich portraitist holding eccentric but fashionable midnight parties, stroked his big blond beard, reflected a moment and then with a twinkle in his eye delivered his epigram.

"Our epoch," he said, "is the cocktail epoch. Cocktails! They are of all colours. They contain something of everything. No, I do not merely mean the cocktails that one drinks. They are symbolic of the rest. The modern society woman is a cocktail. She is a bright mixture. Society itself is a bright mixture. You can blend people of all tastes and classes. The cocktail epoch!"

Incidentally, the French are trying to Frenchify the word as well as the American concoction for which it stands, and there are perpetual discussions in academic and unacademic circles as to whether it should be spelt "cocktail" or "coquetèle."

Cocktail, or coquetèle, the description of post-war Paris is exact.

Sometimes I regret that I have ever known another Paris—not because I am delighted with the meretricious mixture, but because I find myself continually comparing it to a much better Paris which has vanished. The present Paris is exhilarating enough; it is both good and bad, and I must not be understood to be flatly condemning it. Yet the former Paris satisfied one's sense of order. For myself I have had exceptional opportunities which have admitted me into the dens of apaches and into the most select salons. But somehow I have kept an old-fashioned predilection for sharply defined categories of people. I like all classes, but I do not want them shaken together—orange juice and gin, butter merchants and nobles, actresses and princesses, cabaret-keepers and diplomatists. Anything more amazing than the composition of Parisian society today it would be impossible to imagine.

The other day I was at a dinner party at which there were present a French Minister, an English official, a celebrated lawyer accompanied by a nondescript lady, the Prefect of Police, and a beautiful comédienne. The beautiful comédienne had just made her first appearance in the correctional court for outraging the dignity of a *sergent de ville* who had stopped her automobile by hurling at him an unprintable and malodorous word. It amused the Prefect of Police who sat by her. There were others—politicians, journalists, an American cantatrice,—men and women of different nationalities, different cultures, different situations in life. Yet they made a happy family. Nobody troubles it would seem about meeting the "right people" any more. Provided the guests are "amusing," what does it matter? Alas! sometimes they are not even amusing.

I have just read in an English newspaper the following gossipy paragraph: "Another future new London hostess, a very wealthy Frenchwoman who has only resided for a short while in London, is greatly interested, she says, by the extremely mixed nature of London society. In Paris, of course, the old families keep very much to themselves, and if any members of them go out in a party with people who have fast reputations, they do it in a spirit of rather guilty experiment. In London times have changed greatly since the war, and even at formal dinner parties you never can know exactly, except at a handful of houses, next to whom you are going to sit."

The "of course" in reference to Paris is delicious. It simply denotes ignorance. There are "of course" old French families

which have not yet fallen into the current ways, just as there are I presume old American families and old English families which maintain rigorous rules of etiquette. But they are certainly far fewer than they were five or six years ago.

In one respect the French aristocracy is comparatively conservative. It does not readily open the doors of its homes to the newcomer. It tries to keep up a fair standard in the Faubourg Saint-Germain. Nevertheless French aristocracy is dying out. "Le monde se meurt, le monde est mort!" Balzac bewailed its decay, and Renan remarked that the disappearance of a social head is a terrible blow to a social élite. "Blue blood!" exclaimed a lady to me, "we are chiefly intrigued by black blood: negroes —negro-painting, negro sculpture, negro music, and negro dancing."

The truth is that with the growth of democracy French aristocracy has long been in decline. It was scattered by the Revolution and a new and more vulgar nobility was created by Napoléon. The Emigrés who came back were relatively poor. They contracted marriages with the parvenus. The most ancient social order in the world was adulterated. With the Restoration they endeavoured to regain their old position but the Revolution of 1830 again threw them into disorder. The aristocratic salons were closed—and the younger women opened salons in which they received writers, artists, and others whose romantic eccentricities piqued their curiosity. Then there were Italian and Russian princesses who had their little courts at Paris.

The second Empire was glittering enough in all conscience but the demi-monde came conspicuously on the scene. Social Paris was loud and indiscreet. The Third Republic which encouraged the bourgeoisie drove the old nobility into its last trenches. Still, one could mention beautiful and accomplished women who queened it over salons which were frequented by the leading personalities of Europe, including the Prince of Wales, afterwards Edward VII. There still existed what the French called *bon ton*. It is not quite dead but it is dying.

It was before the war that the Marquis Boni de Castellane—whose portrait has appropriately been painted by Van Dongen —discovered America. His discovery was perhaps as important as that of Christopher Columbus. He was a pioneer. Since he married Anna Gould hundreds of American women have obtained a European title and incidentally a European husband in return for American gold. "This girl will never be such a fool as to marry any man who is foolish enough to marry her."

So pronounced a sceptical Englishman. But the marriage was contracted, to be followed some years later by a divorce, after which the daughter of the American magnate married the Duc de Talleyrand. History has repeated itself in this connection so often that poor Clio has become positively boring. Even "movie" actresses snap up titled Frenchmen: for example Gloria Swanson married the Marquis de la Falaise.

What wealth was dispensed in the palace of rose marble in the Avenue du Bois de Boulogne! All Paris talked of the fêtes of the Marquis. There is an art in spending, and in this Boni de Castellane was one of the supreme artists of our time. "I became poor again after eleven years of opulence," he said, "and now I am compelled to earn my living. A millionaire must know how to spend his income, and nobody has manipulated his fortune better than myself." Mansions, yachts, château, horses and objets d'art he possessed and he knew how to put them in evidence; and yet he was not—and is not—as are so many of the *nouveaux riches* who have made Paris a glaring and blaring city of pleasure—a vulgarian. He possessed an incomparable style. His manner was worthy of another century than ours. Though he has denied it, he was a blend of Petronius, the arbiter of elegance, and of Beau Brummel. "Mai d'Ounour che d' Ounours—More honour than honours" is the Provençal motto of his family.

A strange representative of a departing age! Yet in some sense he is responsible for the changes which he deplores—the annihilation of order and of hierarchy in the modern social world. When, in the mid-nineties, after mingling with the Gramonts and the Polignacs, after passing some time in the highest London society, he sailed for America, he had only a few hundred francs in his pocket. His marriage was a sensational event. It was something new. The union of European aristocracy and American riches was a dangerous initiative. European aristocracy has succumbed to the lure of American gold.

It would be a long and tedious task to enumerate the many marriages of a similar nature which have since succeeded each other. Few of them have been happy. I have a poor memory for these social sensations—and indeed they are no longer sensations. Thus it has come about that when I have been presented to a Princess or a Marquise with the most exotic name I have been foolishly startled at hearing myself addressed in the most perfect English—or the American variant of English.

There are even American women who have aspirations to

European thrones, and if times were not so hard for Kings and Queens, they would doubtless have attained to the splendours of sovereignty. As it is, they are in the line of succession, and as the wheel of fortune may turn in a continent which is subject to vicissitudes we may await with interest the result of the race to the throne. Who will be the first American Queen in Europe?

Some Americans have carried this snobbish love of titles to excesses which can only be regarded as lamentable. Far better is the Mark Twain attitude which poked fun at European antiquities. We all recall his pilgrim who when told that a religious flame had been burning for more than a thousand years promptly blew it out and declared, "Well, I guess it won't burn any longer."

Dr. Victor Clarke, the Editor of the Living Age, when he was in Paris told me a similar story. He had met on the boat a pleasant but somewhat naïve young engineer. They happened to stay in the same hotel in Paris. Clarke went with him one day to the towers of Notre-Dame, and after surveying the magnificent panorama of the winding river, with its vista of bridges, and the roofscape of the town, he called the attention of the young engineer to the broken stones and battered gargoyles of the Cathedral itself. "Just think," he said, "all this is eight hundred years old."

The young engineer meditated a moment, and then remarked, "Yes, it would be better if it were a bit newer, wouldn't it?"

So too with a Senator who shall be nameless. He was shown the beautiful architecture, and finally his comment was, "Ah, but you should see our new hotel in ——; there's hot and cold water in every room!"

Or that other Chicago merchant who not only collected pictures by old masters but dabbled himself in painting. (I have known a number of men and women who have come to Paris after a strenuous life of business and who in a spirit of emulation have suddenly decided to become artists.) My friend was looking at his collection. He was attracted by a certain picture.

"That," said he, "is almost like a Corot. Why, it must be a Corot. And yet it cannot be a Corot. How curious! There is much in it that reminds me of Corot but then again—no, it cannot be."

"You are right," was the response, "it is a Corot. Only, I have just touched up the sky a little."

Comic as these anecdotes are, I prefer, I say, this attitude to

the attitude of stupid respect, insincere and unintelligent, that is often shown towards things European. Social life, largely owing to the invasion of men and women of the younger countries, has become a higgledy-piggledy confusion. "Tout-Paris" today cannot be classified. The labels have been lost. Men and women of every nationality under the sun make up the modern cosmopolitan Paris which seems chiefly to exist for them.

Let me give an example, though I must here suppress names. In the society columns of one of the local editions of an American newspaper I read that "the big private salon and ballroom of the Ritz was the scene last night of a charming dinner-party given by Mrs.—— in honour of M. and Mme—— while the regular Sunday night dinner dance was held as usual in the dining-halls. Among the sixty guests were ——."

Now the lady who gave the dinner-party was associated in the management of a nocturnal establishment—certainly an extremely *chic* establishment, but still, as the French say, a *boîte de nuit*—while the honoured guests were a distinguished French diplomatist and his wife whose names are known in the two hemispheres. The guests included a Greek Prince and Princess ——, a favourite American actress, a Russian Prince and Princess, and the Princess' brother, Mr.——, an American financier, an Egyptian political intriguer, Sir ——, a Central European Jew adventurer and his American wife, members of the Rothschild family, an English banker established in Paris, and so forth.

What a hotch-potch! Yet it could be matched any evening in Paris at any of the stylish hotels and restaurants and champagne cabarets and night-haunts with their negro orchestras, their *gigolos,* and their pleasure-seekers from the five continents.

Though Americans are hidden under a good percentage of these titles, every nationality is represented in the dinners at the Café de Paris, Ciro's—in some respects the most elegant of Paris restaurants—Delmonico's, and, in the warmer days, the restaurants of the Bois de Boulogne—the Château de Madrid, Armenonville, and Pré-Catelan. This is social life on the surface; and unhappily social life becomes more and more superficial every year, and to the strain of jazz-bands, French, Czecho-Slovacs, Russians, Indians, Cubans, Brazilians, eat and drink and dance as publicly as possible.

Conversation is a lost art, and therefore it is found more amusing to go to those places where trick-drummers throw their sticks in the air, and beat rhythmically several stretched

skins and brasses at the same time, than to sit quietly in drawing-rooms. It is seldom that one hears anybody regret the change from elegant talk to inelegant dancing.

Curiously enough, the most bitter comments on the rarity of interesting conversation nowadays were addressed to me by an Oriental diplomatist. He had sat somewhat sulkily in his corner at a party. I moved over to him: "You don't dance?" I asked. "Dance?" he replied. "I cannot understand why nobody thinks of anything else. Give me a little discussion on politics, on literature, on philosophy, on art—on what you will. That is the way to pass an evening. That is the way we used to pass our evenings when I first knew Paris."

I expressed kindred views. I recalled my own Latin Quarter days, when, in friendly houses, or even in the familiar precincts of a favourite café, we talked the night down. We were like two old cronies shaking our heads over the past. Those were the days! Well, well, it is very foolish perhaps to linger fondly on that which has gone and which it would seem can never be again. But we agreed that for us Paris was no longer that intellectual city which dazzled one by its conversational brilliancy. Then, stimulated by the others, one became almost witty oneself. There is more sparkle in good company than in all the champagne that was ever bottled. How we settled the affairs of the universe in a few clear sentences! How we executed politicians and poets by sharp little epigrams, as sudden as the knife of the guillotine. Now nobody cares. Nobody can be bothered to talk. Everybody is dumb—in both senses of the word. Yes, it was an Oriental who most strongly denounced the essential unsociability of Occidental society.

A clever French journalist, Paul Reboux, lately fell foul of the champagne merchants. He dared to speak disrespectfully of the Veuve Clicquot, and was almost rude to Hiedsieck. Moët et Chandon were perturbed, and Mumm fell on silence. There were, however, dealers in champagne who belaboured Reboux. They asserted that he was the poorest kind of patriot. They would have liked to send him to the *poteau* of Vincennes to face a firing squad and share the fate of other traitors. The champagne industry has already been badly hit, they said: it suffered during the war when Germans occupying Rheims drank up large quantities of the bubbling liquor without paying for it, and afterwards prohibitionist United States closed its doors to champagne, and North European nations also did their best to keep it out of their countries.

They forgot to add that if the mountain could not go to

Mohammed, Mohammed came in hordes to the mountain—that is to say, the whole world rushed to France to drink champagne.

Champagne—and of course cocktails. Champagne and cocktails hunt in couples. One receives an invitation couched in this language:

Monsieur and Madame Tartempion
At Home: Thursday, 5 to 7. Cocktails.

After the guests are sufficiently befuddled with cocktails they go to restaurants to eat food whose quality they are quite incapable of appreciating, washed down by copious draughts of champagne. Finally they wind up the night in a Montmartre cabaret where champagne may be 300 francs a bottle or more.

M. Reboux whom I had long known as a humourist for once became serious. He described champagne as a feather-brained creature of easy virtue, daringly décolletée, light-toed, Charleston-crouped, a fitting companion only in the over-heated atmosphere of nocturnal halls. Champagne is for foolish dissipation. It has not the sobriety of burgundy nor the gravity of claret. Perhaps he was too sweeping—he should also have remarked that champagne, by old established custom, accompanies the dullest official banquets, furnishing inadequate compensation for interminable discourses. Yet, on the whole, Reboux is to be commended for his outspoken challenge to the foolish and frivolous social life which is symbolised by champagne and cocktails, and which would be impossible without nigger orchestras and the constant trepidation of rag-time haunches.

Let us be fair to the French. General Gouraud, the most *sympathique* Military Governor Paris has ever had—how the Paris crowds cheer when they see him limping along, his empty sleeve stuck into the pocket of his tunic, his great beard spread like a fan over his chest!—once told me that never, since his student years, has he visited Montmartre, and never is he to be encountered in the fashionable restaurants. Frenchmen of his stamp avoid these places like the plague. They would consider it undignified to rival the rajahs and the rastas who make up Tout-Paris. If they are dragged into certain associations with pork-packers and profiteers they are unhappy.

Nevertheless I could mention several Ministers who frequent Maxim's, and who, like the foreigner, look upon Paris as a playground. The law of libel is virtually non-existent in France, and therefore a score of lively journals tell us of the private conduct of Ministers. There is little that can be concealed from

Parisians. They are aware that a well-known Radical leader is more often to be found dancing at Claridge's than working in his bureau; and they picture a fire-eating Nationalist befuddled at table in the intervals of speech-making. There was, during the war, a scandal about the loose conduct of a Minister who gave gay parties while much older men died in the trenches. These paragraphs in the gossip-sheets help to foster the scorn and contempt which the Parisian worker instinctively feels for his rulers.

The phenomenon is not altogether new. Nineteenth Century Paris had its extravagant persons who obtained their place in society by reason of their reputation for folly. Occasionally we are informed that a fine mansion in the Champs-Elysées is in danger of demolition, and the Minister of Beaux-Arts is urged to save it by classifying it as an historical monument. A little research shows that it is historical because it was given by a member of the aristocracy, or by a rich man-about-town, to a famous courtesan. I have noted several such houses and have been amused by the columns in the newspapers extolling the charm of La P——, the danseuse of the Seventies, or of C——, the gilded professional beauty of the Sixties.

So today you may be in the public eye of Paris because you wear Gladstone collars and lose millions in gambling at Deauville, or because you have "launched" an actress by paying for advertisements in the newspapers exactly as you might have "launched" a brand of soap. These are not, as may be imagined, fictitious cases. There are many methods of becoming a conspicuous Parisian, whatever the colour of your skin. You may be a foreign owner of race-horses, known to every devotee of Longchamps, Auteuil and Maisons-Lafitte; or you may be a manufacturer whose name is written on the night-sky in letters of fire. More and more the passport to both popularity and society is ostentatious display; and though it is silly to say that the Parisians themselves are better-behaved, yet it is true to say that the unprecedented influx of foreigners since the war has helped to throw the classes together in higgledy-piggledy vulgarity, and has converted Paris into a vast bazaar of pleasure.

A cocktail epoch! That is a good phrase which will doubtless stick.

Chapter II

PARISIAN NIGHTS ENTERTAINMENTS

MULTITUDINOUS are the Parisian Nights Entertainments. There is something to see, by Bacchus, something to hear at least; in Paris (to distort Robert Browning) one's life, if one wants amusement, may be a continuous feast. The trouble is that perpetual amusement is tiring, and visitors as well as natives who have gone the rounds soon wear an expression of ennui.

That is why, wearied of the conventional show-places, rich travellers now find their way to Montparnasse. There, they imagine, they will be in a Bohemian world. They will be at home among the artists. The moment there is a new movement of this sort, there are men ready to exploit the sightseer. Montparnasse, which was until lately the resort of artists and writers, as Montmartre was before it, has now become a noisy bright-lit rendezvous of snobs. Its taverns blaze into the night.

Certainly there is greater liberty at Montparnasse than in the Champs-Elysées; but many of the frequenters merely dress the part of Bohemians. At Fouquet's in the Champs-Elysées they would be smartly clad, but at the Dôme they are in négligé. Occasionally they roll up in beautiful automobiles dressed as for the Opéra, swallow-tail coats and white ties, gorgeous evening robes and cloaks; and they make a fine display of pearls and diamonds at the Rotonde. But this is exceptional. Generally they are content to put on rakish clothes as though they were Haroun al-Raschid descending in disguise to the lower town. So they sit on the terrace of the Select or of the Coupole—a new flaunting German-looking café—trying to pick out the artists; but only discovering their own kind. It is very amusing.

Bohemia is so attractive for the wealthy idler that one enterprising firm has arranged visits to the studios of real artists. I am surprised—and pained—to observe that well-known artists have consented to be put on personal exhibition. At a given hour, fixed in advance, a personally-conducted group breaks in upon a painter seated in his atelier before his easel. He blushingly stands while the guide explains how paint is applied, and may consent to apply a little in the presence of the company. A number of men who should be above charlatanism lend themselves to these devices. Doubtless they find customers in the crowd.

One of the visitors told me how he bought a picture from such an artist. The artist, to my knowledge, though famous was poor and would have been glad to sell at any price. Here is the story related with chuckles of conscious cleverness.

"You see, I took a fancy to some flowers he had painted but I did not want to pay too much. So as a business man I informed him that although I admired the picture I had just experienced heavy losses. I said I scarcely dared to suggest such a low figure as 1,500 dollars; but unfortunately it was all I could afford. He reflected, and then suddenly replied—'It is yours. Take it. Yesterday I was offered 2,000 dollars for that very canvas, but I refused the money. Why? Because the buyer meant to speculate in my picture. He did not really appreciate it. Whereas you—you like it for itself, and you shall have it.' "

I grunted, but made no articulate comment. I happened to be aware that the artist would have been only too glad to get $100 for his picture, and would have thanked his lucky stars for having sent him a purchaser. But everybody was happy. The purchaser was happy in obtaining what he considered a bargain at fifteen times the figure he need have paid, and he was above all happy at his supposed astuteness. The painter was overjoyed at his good fortune; and I could not help thinking that he was, after all, easily the better business man of the two.

That reminds me of the late Frank A. Munsey, also a smart business man. He was buying a newspaper. His subordinates had brought the negotiations to a virtual agreement about the price. At the final meeting Munsey appeared in person. "I cannot," he declared, "waste any time in further discussion. My figure is four million dollars. You can take it or leave it."

They took it. The figure which had been agreed upon in the preliminary negotiations was three millions.

Another expedition is called "Paris by Night." There are motor-coaches which make the tour of the town; and guides explain the sights in German, Italian, French, Spanish and English. The information that is conveyed is of doubtful accuracy. But the joke is the descent to the Catacombs. Everybody should know that the genuine Catacombs can only be visited under official guidance at certain hours, and of course not at night. The party is introduced into the cellar of a house under which excavations have been made. There is above the cellar a notice "The Catacombs. Private Property of ——."

It is explained that time has caused the original bones which were placed in these underground passages to fall to dust: therefore they have been replaced by imitations in wax!

Again, at Montmartre the party is shown a "cabaret": which is also the "private property of ——." Needless to say the cabaret is not open except for the purpose of this visit. The chansonniers are specially hired. The men wear long flaxen wigs, baggy trousers, flowing neckties; and the girls wear red aprons, and their false hair is arranged in a golden casque. These things are expected, and they are supplied.

Still, it was just as bad before the war, when the Tournée des Grand Ducs was in vogue. The Russians—whether Grand Dukes or not—and the rest were conducted to faked apache dens. There were the red-aproned golden-casqued girls, and the sinister-looking apaches with caps drawn over their eyes. In the course of the dancing a quarrel would break out. A duel with knives would be fought. The Grand Dukes had their money's worth of thrills; and then the girls took off their aprons and the men donned respectable hats and went quietly home to bed.

Montmartre—that is to say, the streets around the Place Pigalle—contains more night-haunts than ever. They are, however, garishly ornamented, and evening dress is *de rigueur*. Joe Zelli, an Italian, is the King of the Cabaret-Keepers, and has been by far the most successful purveyor of champagne and dancing. But there are other establishments which are less popular and more fashionable: the Palermo, the Perroquet, the Abbaye de Thélème . . .

That reminds me of the late Lord Curzon who was somewhat pompous of speech. He had been taken by a party to the Abbaye for supper. As he was sitting back enjoying a cigar, a bedizened woman entered. He tapped my friend who was with him on the shoulder and drawled:

"I say, M——, I suppose that's what you call a strumpet."

But it is to be remarked that in external appearance there is no longer any difference between the honest woman—and the other kind of woman. They have both the same kind of dress and the same kind of manners—unless perhaps one should say that the other sort are generally better-behaved and more discreet. In all these public places you meet women, old and young, whose appearance is blatantly intended to be attractive to men. Probably they defeat their intention by excess; yet coquetry, which used to be comparatively rare, and was generally concealed except for the particular object of the coquetry, is now open and universal. Bare arms, bare necks, legs uncovered to the knee or beyond, are so conspicuous a feature of the theatre, the restaurant, the salon, that they almost

pass unnoticed. While speaking to you a lady will pass her lipstick over her lips, plant her mirror boldly on the table, and apply powder to her face. Sometimes she will even produce a comb. . . .

Paul Gaultier is a moralist who is doubtless too severe. We used to meet at a weekly *déjeuner intime*, of which he was the leading spirit, in the Cercle de la Renaissance in the rue de Poitiers, a quiet little street in the aristocratic Faubourg Saint-Germain. There our company was composed of diplomatists, distinguished soldiers, politicians, sociologists, writers. I have seldom known an association of more thoughtful men, and although the food was good and we enjoyed each other's society, yet our principal purpose was to discuss frankly current problems. It was understood that nothing should be repeated elsewhere, and therefore an Ambassador or a Prefect or a Senator would sometimes make the most astonishing revelations, certain that he would not be betrayed. Here indeed was an oasis in the waste of a hectic city. Few of the real notabilities of Paris, French or foreign, have not at some time or other expressed themselves without reserve in these private precincts. Gaultier was a wonderful *animateur*. He induced everybody to talk and his face positively lit up with pleasure as he listened.

But he could talk himself to some purpose. Director of the Revue Bleue, he was alive to the extraordinary social changes. "It is the new Paganism," he said. "What is curious is that even the most conservative families adopt customs that would have shocked them unspeakably a few years ago. Our mothers, for example, considered powder with suspicion, but their daughters, and especially their granddaughters, belonging to the strictest bourgeoisie, paint themselves exactly as, in the last century, did *les femmes galantes*. Indeed in our day *les femmes galantes* set the mode—which the rest surpass. The courtesan, however successful, used to be despised. Today she is envied, admired, invited, flattered. Bourgeoisies and grandes dames imitate her. That is their principal preoccupation. Virtuous *mères de famille* try to resemble her. Partly this is because the fashion journals print her portrait, and distribute millions of copies. So that the humblest village girl contrives, as far as possible, to look like the most scandalous vedette. The fault does not altogether lie with the feminine sex. Husbands expect their wives to possess the sophisticated charm, in toilette, appearance, speech, gestures, of—the French word must here be used—*poules*. Modesty has disappeared. It is not astonishing that in the music-halls one can see perfectly nude women—and pay

no attention to them, for they hardly reveal more than one can see in the best drawing-rooms."

He is right but he might have added that the pendulum having swung as far as it can go in one direction must necessarily swing back. The music-halls are discovering that the nude fails in its appeal, and though audiences of men and women will doubtless continue to be regaled with such spectacles (of boys as well as girls) the tendency is to clothe the more attractive tableaux. The nude quickly engenders indifference. When Toulouse-Lautrec, queer dwarf of genius, sat on high stools and sketched the music-hall of his time, a tumultuous sea of lace and of linen produced far more effect than the most complete déshabillé of today.

It is a far cry from Toulouse-Lautrec to Sem. The two men have only one point in common—they both drew the circus of their time. But the circus of Sem's time is not confined to a few haunts, and the performers are not professional. The circus is society. What a wicked pencil Sem has! Nothing so cruel has ever been produced as his albums. One might suppose he has caricatured his personages out of existence, that they hide their heads with shame. Not a bit of it. They are proud to be depicted, doing the most absurd things, in the most absurd postures. They plead to be put in his albums. They regard it as an honour. To be exposed by his ironic art is the supreme compliment. It is better than being made Commander of the Legion of Honour. Unless you have been thoroughly shown up by him, you are scarcely to be included in Tout-Paris. He is the author of the Gotha and the Debrett of Paris life. Surely it is lamentable that nobody can be hurt by his dreadful crayon, that on the contrary everybody is flattered. Some of his drawings represent well-known men and women with the most shocking cynicism—and those whom he thus castigates do not look for him with a dog-whip, but invite him to dinner.

The only exception to this rule I ever heard of was Fanny Ward, the eternally young cinema actress. He had, I think, depicted her taking part in an inoffensive *scène de ménage*. Her husband, Jack Dean, a handsome man whose chin was unfortunately trebled by an inexpert process of facial restoration—a good fellow whose only fault is that he writes poems for recitation in the style of 'The Face on the Bar-room Floor,' and recites them—naturally figured in this composition. When the blue-eyed golden-haired little lady protested, Sem obligingly blotted out the picture, and substituted one of himself in the character of a somewhat indecent monkey. "How can they

complain," ran the text which he wrote with his own hand, "when I make such cartoons of myself?" This cartoon is still to be seen on the walls of a favourite Parisian resort.

But generally nobody complains. They rejoice in this devastating canonisation. Are they not celebrities if he has condescended to put them in his pillory?

I first met Sem—or Monsieur Goursat to give him his real name—at one of those big but rather mournful dinner-parties which Mr. James Hazen Hyde, the rich American expatriate who stands high in the esteem of the French, was in the habit of giving in his sumptuous house near the Bois de Boulogne. He has the appearance of an intelligent ape. His funny puckered face, his bushy eyebrows, his queer shifting eyes—even, in some mysterious way, the great goggles on his tiny nose—could easily be given a simian turn. He is short of stature and slightly bent. We sat at the great table—I have always contended that a cheerful dinner-party should not exceed six or possibly eight guests—silently looking out of the big windows on trees laden with snow while the soft-footed servants stole around. Conversation seemed difficult, though we, in the approved manner, belonged to different worlds, diplomatic, theatrical, literary, financial. Afterwards I occasionally encountered him, an unforgettable figure, at various functions where he was always the center of admirers.

His nom de guerre, he told me, was adopted because there had been in earlier days a caricaturist who called himself Cham, and another who called himself Japhet. So he became Sem. These are French spellings of the Biblical trio. He began to sketch at Marseilles about the beginning of the century and soon had a local notoriety. Advised to try his fortune in Paris, he met Henri Letellier, the amusing proprietor of the Journal who has now retired, apparently to devote himself to the duties of a social life at Paris, Deauville, and Monte Carlo. They became inseparable friends. Sem's drawings were soon celebrated. During the war he wrote and illustrated a really remarkable little book of his impressions. But his albums filled with the contortions of Tout-Paris—which includes Tout-Deauville and Tout-Cannes—are his chief work. The race-courses, the dancing-halls, the plage, provide him with an abundance of grotesque models.

Sem, the caricaturist, Boldini, the brilliant portrait painter, and Helleu, whose delicate dry-points of women and children are the quintessence of elegance—these three represent different aspects and perhaps different stages of a whole epoch. They

were indeed often to be found together. Their styles were diverse and these three limners of a quarter of a century were by no means rivals. The brilliant Boldini became morose and solitary in his old age, but the comic savagery of Sem appeared to render him far from gay.

I should add that there are three other fashionable portrait painters today—Van Dongen, Jacques Emile Blanche, and Jean Gabriel Domergue.

It is curious to observe how often audacious satirists are shy. Sem is modest and retiring. Utterly fearless with his pencil, he seems in social relations timid and bashful. Always is he absorbed in his work. Other people may be entertaining themselves, but he is studying intensely. There he was to be found in the "dancing," and on the race-course, pretending to sip champagne, or watch the horses, but in reality making many notes. Simple are his lines, but his happy exaggerations are obtained only after numerous attempts to catch the characteristic feature and attitude. His sketches are, by long labour, condensed to a few essential strokes.

"I follow my models like a Red Indian on the trail. I must get them unawares."

He sometimes tells a story of how he tracked an English nobleman at Ascot, and followed him, without noticing what he was doing, into the Royal enclosure. There he was caught by the coat collar and taken to the Steward's office as a suspicious person.

Sem is just as terrible for the women as for the men. He makes them ugly. If they have little chins, he gives them no chins. If they have large noses, they become all nose. If they wear ridiculous hats or robes, he brings out their bad taste unmercifully. If they are thin, he says so. If they are fat, they swell to elephantine proportions. Their pearls look like negro ornaments. Their foibles are developed into vices. Yet the women feel more than compensated by his condescension in noticing them.

Never has he done anything more cruel than the series of sketches to which he has given the title of "White Bottoms." There you see the distorted souls of so-called society pinned down in all their hideousness. These frenzied white folk, who find their amusement in imitating the least admirable qualities of the basest negroes, are a pitiful collection of human beings. And they look upon themselves as superior people, the leaders of cosmopolitan France!

I dwell upon the vitriolic talent of Sem because it is truly a

portent of our time: it is a portent because nobody resents it. He has furnished us with the most scathing commentary on the manners and the intelligence of modern plutocracy. If modern plutocracy had any sense it would suppress Sem as the most formidable ally of the Bolsheviks. I am glad it has no sense, for Sem is necessary, and Sem is the ruthless talented observer that corrupt societies nearly always provide for their own undoing.

Sometimes a French writer becomes indignant at the imported features of post-war Paris. Josephine Baker, the negress with hair plastered down flat by the application of tar, took the town by storm when she first appeared at the Champs-Elysées. But Robert de Flers called her performance "lamentable Transatlantic exhibitionism, which brings us back to the monkey much quicker than we descended from the monkey." He experienced "anger and shame." The troop of negresses with their puerile mimicry, their sad frenzy, their meaningless cries, had not even the excuse of voluptuousness or exotic charm. "We are asked," he said, to celebrate "the cult of ugliness, the reign of disequilibrium, the apotheosis of discordance." The star, Josephine Baker, he admitted, was supple and robust. But why does she make her legs as angular as possible, squint hideously, puff out her cheeks, and dislocate her body? Her admirers declare that never has the human line been so deformed; but is this a recommendation? Does it contain the principles of the new æsthetics? It is not a primitive humanity that is shown, but a degenerate humanity. The dancers are not simple savages in a virgin forest, but folk of the cities who try to revive memories of impure dens.

This is plain speaking with a vengeance; but he is even harder on the crowd of snobs who enjoy or pretend to enjoy a refined pleasure in this indecent display. Here is the measure of an epoch with its swiftness, its vibration, its tumult, its palpitating nerves, its disorder. Here is the "orchestration of the emotions of today." M. de Flers is anxious that foreigners—American or British—should not imagine that French taste has really fallen as low as French money. He quotes an American who is equally anxious that "La Revue Nègre" should not be considered characteristically American. "It would not be put on in New York, except, perhaps, in a negro quarter." How, then, is the show to be defended? Certain people, according to M. de Flers, say they are too fatigued to be amused, but want to find some fresh fashion of being *ennuyé*. This spectacle pleases because of its very absence of civilisation, even elementary; because it sweeps aside all that has been understood, thought, or

felt, precisely as if no book had ever been written, and two ideas, two sounds, and two colours had never been put into accord.

Needless to say this vituperation did no harm to Josephine Baker. She not only was the star who filled the Folies-Bergère for many months, but who put on a midnight show in her own crowded cabaret, and afterwards went to fresh triumphs in Vienna.

Then there are the Russian nights. Perhaps it was Nikita Balieff who popularised the Russians. His performances were refined and pleasant, and his introductions to each succeeding scene were quaint. I believe I was the first writer to praise him in the United States and in Great Britain. But there came hard on his heels a horde of Russian exiles, some with talent and some without. They opened Russian restaurants, Russian tea-rooms, Russian cabarets. The last time I was taken to Montmartre I found myself in a Russian "cavern." Two bottles of champagne were ordered. They were priced at 250 francs each. Immediately a swarm of girls, in Russian peasant costume, asked if they might not order a bottle at our expense. We smiled our consent. After hearing a few songs, we called for the bill.

The items on the bill included no fewer than six bottles of champagne. It was impossible to demur, though we were surprised. Then there were all kinds of taxes. Again there was nothing to be said. But finally there was an item of 30 francs for biscuits which apparently had been placed on the table, though nobody had ordered them, and a similar charge for salted almonds, and a third item of dates. Then I protested . . .

Obviously these places are destroying themselves by their own greediness.

The Lido—a new establishment in the Champs-Elysées—is described as "the transportation of Venice to the French capital." I cannot improve on the following account of it which I find in a local newspaper and I quote it with all its naïveté:

"It is an immense marble hall underground, constructed with high Roman pillars which support gorgeously painted ceilings on the lines of those in the Venetian palaces.

"On entering the place you are first confronted with a square dance floor, which is raised slightly above the ground level. Innumerable small tables are dotted about over an illuminated glass floor. And at the extreme end is a large swimming pool with which even the most fastidious Nero could not find fault. It is a most luxurious affair, made in pastel shades of marble glistening through pure green limpid water.

"At intervals some twenty fountains are turned on at either side of the pool. These spray, forming a perfect rainbow arch which is reflected in a large mirror at the end of the hall.

"During supper one is entertained by half a dozen beautiful young dancers, then by a Neapolitan guitar band, which plays its romantic melodies from a small balcony above the swimming bath.

"It is frequented at night (until three o'clock in the morning) mostly by the French and Americans. At cocktail time it is packed with every nationality, most of them in bathing suits. The women bathers sport incredible costumes.

"Their faces are powdered and painted, and one does not splash!

"The water is warm. The bath is also filled with rubber rafts and rubber horses and ducks."

It should be added that masculine beauties display their manly forms for our admiration, strutting round in swimming attire.

There are several famous balls held annually at the Opéra. One is the Bal de la Couture. The Garde Republicaine stand like statues on the magnificent grand staircase, the light flashing on their polished helmets and drawn sabres. Thousands of members of Parisian society jostle each other in a stifling atmosphere. Here are shimmering cloaks of velvet or lamé or satin, trimmed with priceless fur or encrusted with lace. Here are the gorgeous Spanish shawls and mantillas and combs which Raquel Meller introduced to Paris. Here are frocks glittering with jewelled embroidery or trimmed with feathers.

Here and there are officers in bright uniform. The boxes are crammed tight: the auditorium is so filled by midnight that it is almost impossible to stir. Then the mannequins parade on a platform: every dressmaking house in Paris sending its gowns. Finally there is a battle of "snowballs."

The number of dressmaking houses has increased prodigiously since the war; though I believe the older *maisons,* which for long refused to advertise, feel the pinch. The younger establishments adopt enterprising methods. I would receive invitations to the spring and autumn displays; in large halls men and women in evening dress sat at tables and champagne was served. These shows too are social functions.

Then there are the furriers' balls and the jewellers' balls, and the Bal des Petits Lits Blancs, which is a charity ball. Everybody who is anybody—as the phrase goes—from the President of the Republic to the Dolly Sisters makes a point of being present.

Ambassadors and actresses are thrown together pell-mell . . . The details have changed, but the essentials have not changed since Balzac inimitably wrote of the Opéra balls.

An extraordinary Parisian Nights Entertainment is provided by the Six Days Cycle Race at the Velodrome d'Hiver—the Vel' d'Hiv' as it is familiarly called.

There while the unfortunate cyclists turn like squirrels, a motley throng assembles. It is after midnight that the spectacle is most astonishing. There is the populace of Paris, witty but impertinent, shouting encouragement and insult. There are the elegant revellers of Paris, befurred and bediamonded. The rich onlookers offer prizes to the competitors, and when they are not generous enough the "populaires" hurl violent apostrophes at them, treating the women as "poules de luxe." The contrast between the rich idlers in their loggias, with their champagne before them, and the masses in the galleries is amazing. A crude white light falls on this strange scene. The "squirrels" turn, turn . . . Paul Morand chose this spectacle for his typical Paris Night.

Throughout the year there are functions which the fashionable world religiously attends: the Salon des Indépendants, the Concours Agricole, the Horse Show, with its obstacle races and its military carousals, its driving and jumping, in the Grand Palais, the Dog Show, the Flower Show, the Foire de Paris; and then towards the middle of the year the Salon, the meets at Longchamps and particularly the Grand Prix, the Grand Steeplechase at Auteuil, the Drags Day, the French Derby at Chantilly, the Polo at Bagatelle. In the autumn there is the Toy Show, the Automobile Show, the Chrysanthemum Show, the Aviation Show, the Salon d'Automne, and again the exhibitions of the dressmakers.

Paris days and nights! They are varied and exhilarating.

> "Plenty to see, by Bacchus, plenty to hear at least;
> There, the whole day long, one's life is a perfect feast!"

Provided, of course, one has a taste for these Parisian Nights Entertainments.

Chapter III

TWO BOULEVARDIERS

THOUGH it be true that the boulevardier is much less in evidence than before the war, two men who have recently disappeared embodied in different degree much of the urbanity, not unmingled with a slight cynicism, a man-of-the-worldliness, that marked the best epoch of the boulevards. I knew them both: Alfred Capus and Robert de Flers. Capus was outwardly harder and more heedless than De Flers. De Flers was kindlier and more jovial than Capus. They were popular playwrights and were associated in the management of the Figaro which after a long tenancy of the Boulevards, has now removed to the Champs-Elysées where it has under François Coty, the perfumer-publisher, lost something of its old elegant insouciance.

Alfred Capus was celebrated for a certain elegance in the careless optimism he professed. In his plays—such as La Veine and Notre Jeunesse—he popularised a superficial belief that *tout s'arrange*—that everything somehow comes right if one does not worry or even try to put it right. Such a doctrine naturally pleased the Parisian. Though Capus came from the South—like so many Paris wits—he was looked upon as the true Parisian. He regarded the human comedy with an artificial smile. There is a sort of cruelty in his observation. He is without indulgence. Yet in all that he did there was charm.

His friends assert that he never produced the masterpiece of which he was capable—but then friends always make that remark, because it enables them, while showing their esteem, to assert their superiority. No, there is little in the work of Capus that will live. His characters were mere puppets, as are the characters of most of the men of his generation—the Lavedans and the Donnays. Yet they talk brilliantly and put in evidence the ingenuity of their author.

Capus was far too characteristic a figure of the days when I best knew Paris intimately to be omitted from these sketches. I saw enough of him to appreciate his exquisite manners. I came upon the track of Capus in almost every milieu, theatrical, literary, journalistic, sporting, social, in the early years. Afterwards the spirit of Paris changed, and men like Capus seemed to be somewhat demoded. There was, I understand, a secret

grief, a *tragédie intime,* in his later life. It caused a little babble. But I was not curious enough to ascertain the truth. The gaming tables were not without their fascination for Capus. I recall a little dialogue in one of his stories which serves to illustrate the philosophy of Capus:

"You play like a fool. You have lost again all that you had won,—and more. It is absurd not to know when to stop."

"Mon cher, the game has no sense if one does not run the risk of being ruined. If it is only a distraction, I would prefer the women."

The love of the green tables is carried to terrible excess in certain classes of Paris society. Within a radius of a quarter of a mile of the Madeleine there are a score of clubs given over to card-playing, in which large sums are lost and won every evening. There were strange whispers of the amounts lost by a former American Ambassador in these haunts. The son of one of the wealthiest businessmen of Paris dissipated in them his father's fortune, lost his business, and committed a crowning folly which compelled him to fly from France. One of the best known Parisians committed suicide as a result of a gaming debt. One heard such stories frequently. For my part, I avoided these places, though there was one in the upper rooms of a fashionable bar kept by an Italian, not far from the offices of the Temps, where I occasionally encountered men whose names were always in the gossipy journals. I have never ceased to wonder why the authorities tolerate these establishments. They are nominally private, but in point of fact, whatever is their fictitious legal status, they are open to anybody who has money to lose, and they are open to well-dressed professional players who generally contrive to win.

This is a digression which takes us far from Alfred Capus. If he fluttered his wings in the so-called places of amusement, he was in spite of appearances a hard worker. In this he resembled many other Parisians who are rarely seen at work and who seem to have unlimited leisure. You meet them in public and they give you the impression that they are incorrigible idlers. But somewhere, out of sight, they are performing prodigies of industry. Such was the case of Capus, polished, mundane, but indefatigable behind the scenes.

Curiously, he started his career with an article on Darwin. Then he began his Chroniques Parisiennes which were the brightest and best of their kind written in the 'Eighties. After serving on the Gaulois, Royalist and aristocratic, he went to the Figaro, which was scarcely less aristocratic. In the 'Nineties

he produced prolifically. Every year he had at least one success in the Boulevard theatres—and often two or three. The list of his plays, which struck precisely the right keynote in the pre-war Paris—frivolous but clever—is lengthy.

Just before the war a lady entered the office of the Figaro and insisted on seeing the Editor, Gaston Calmette. Calmette, scrupulously polite, would not listen to his collaborators—nor to Paul Bourget who was in conversation with him—who advised him to refuse her admittance. "A lady?" he said. "I cannot refuse admittance to a lady." "But she is an adversary." "No matter; she is a lady." So he received Mme. Caillaux with his habitual courtesy, but would apparently make no promise regarding the publication of private correspondence which compromised her husband.

What passed in that little room has often been described, accurately or inaccurately, by those who did not witness the scene. I will not, at third hand, offer another description. Suffice it to say that Gaston Calmette was shot. The lady had entered with a revolver in her muff.

Everybody remembers the trial, which was reported at great length in the columns of the newspapers of the world. Madame Caillaux was acquitted. There is nothing more to add.

Calmette was a great Editor, though his judgment and his discretion were doubtless at fault on this occasion. Who could succeed him?

Alfred Capus, the eminent playwright, the cultured man of letters, the brilliant chronicler of Paris life, undertook the duties of Editorship in conjunction with the Marquis Robert de Flers, another eminent playwright and journalist. This was when the Figaro was still published in the rue Drouot, a few steps from the Boulevards, as was the Gaulois. Robert de Flers became the Literary Director, and Alfred Capus the Political Director.

Capus was not unacquainted with French politics. His brother, Joseph Capus, was a deputy, whom I afterwards heard speaking as Minister in the Chamber. Joseph Capus is in the true line of the great French orators.

Alfred during the war displayed an alert patriotism. He had a real admiration for Clemenceau, though Clemenceau presented a strange contrast by his rude manner with the boulevardier whose chief quality was his finesse.

The spirit of the Boulevard enjoyed the favours of the Académie Français. Lavedan and Donnay and Capus and De Flers were all elected to the august assembly. It is often accused

of being pompous and official, and it cannot be denied that many of its members are, and always have been, distinguished by their dull pedantry—though one of them, Perrault, wrote the most delightful nursery stories ever printed—The Sleeping Beauty, Tom Thumb, Cinderella, Little Red Riding Hood, Bluebeard, Puss-in-Boots and the rest in "Les Contes de Ma Mère L'Oie."

At the end of 1923 Capus succumbed to a painful malady. I was then representing the Times, and I shall never forget the consternation with which a mutual friend announced the news to me. Robert de Flers paid the noblest tribute to his colleague. He painted in delicate little touches the smiling visage, with just a suspicion of scepticism in the smile, the myopic eyes which would suddenly shine with malice, the little movement of the head towards the left shoulder, the slow gestures which would suddenly stop as Capus caught an idea which was disappearing in the smoke of his cigarette, the quick voice in which lingered a meridonial accent. Capus, in conversation, would throw out a casual phrase, and then turn it again and again, playing with it as a cat plays with a mouse.

Wisdom he concealed under verbal fantasy. That was the formula. To be sure the wisdom was worldly. To be sure the fantasy was ironic. Never did Capus indulge in declamation. He aimed at clarity. He aimed at impartiality. He avoided overemphasis. In other words he was French in the Eighteenth Century manner.

Rivarol is the name which occurs to one in thinking of Capus —Rivarol with perhaps a trace of Chamfort. Just as Rivarol impressed his contemporaries as the wittiest of men and yet left little to confirm their judgment, so Capus impressed his contemporaries. Some of his aphorisms which I have collected will show his style:

"It is not worth while repeating to oneself that one is mortal —one will find it out soon enough." "Hazard is often only the will of others." "When a prejudice disappears, a virtue disappears. A virtue is only a prejudice which remains." "Behave not according to the opinion that you have of other people, but according to the opinion that you have of yourself." "Those who are too happy are like professional thieves—they are always caught in the end." "Don't believe yourself to be persecuted. One has more illusions about one's enemies than about one's friends." "Only those are rich who have plenty of pocket money."

Some of his remarks about money reveal the philosophy of

Capus—and of the philosophy of the boulevardier. "I have never found it amusing," says one of his characters, "to run after a hundred sous for dinner nor after a hundred francs for my rent. But I would go cheerfully to work if I needed a million to finish my month . . . To ask a louis from a rich man is mendicity. To ask a hundred thousand francs is a business matter which can be treated between equals . . . In money affairs it is necessary to obtain a high level to be safe. The danger zone is below . . . Today the Bohemian is preoccupied and the financier is without anxieties."

His political aphorisms are well expressed. "Pacifism does not aim at suppressing war: it is only the art of adapting oneself to defeat . . . To pretend to direct the masses is folly. The masses have become too conscious of their force to relinquish it to anybody. There remains only the illusion of power, which cannot satisfy an ardent soul or a lucid spirit . . . There is a fine post for a Dictator in France. But what is surprising is that there are no candidates. Our politicians would like power, but they do not wish to exercise it in perilous conditions. They would like the post of Dictator with a good salary and an assured pension, no risks and no responsibility. Such is the conception of Dictatorship today . . . What we chiefly lack is ambition. We have for governors only peaceful burghers and good fathers of families."

Among his general remarks I take a handful at random. "It is casually, in amusing oneself, that one may say something new and profound—not in trying to do so deliberately . . . One can perhaps obtain justice for others, but never for oneself . . . When a brilliant man of the world is ruined, it is not a disaster; it is an advertisement . . . One of the marks of our epoch is that only rogues have will power . . . A household is in a grave state when one of the partners loves and the other does not. If only neither of them loved they might be happy. . . . Admiration is a sort of panic. As soon as a decree goes forth in the salons and in the press, everybody struggles to admire more than his neighbour. One has a horrible fear of not admiring enough."

When Capus was complimented on the wit with which his plays are stuffed he replied: "That is not a great compliment. It is not difficult to put wit into a comedy. It is difficult to make a comedy out of wit."

When a mediocre writer presented him with a book—"Here is my last romance"—"Your last?" returned Capus. "That is excellent news."

"Nobody knows of what he died," said someone of one of those bizarre Parisians who move about in society but whose place cannot be defined. "And nobody knows on what he lived," rejoined Capus.

"He is a man without any will-power," was said of a certain Deputy. "No," corrected Capus, "he has will-power—that of his wife."

Do you not catch the note of disenchantment? It is the note of disenchantment of the boulevardier. There is nothing so pessimistic as the apparent optimism of the philosophy of "tout s'arrange."

Robert de Flers, so long the colleague of Alfred Capus on the Figaro, and like him a successful playwright—perhaps the most successful in my time—was less sceptical, less artificial. He was always amiable. But he was also witty. I had glimpses of him at the theatre for some time before I made his acquaintance. Something he had done pleased me particularly, and I wrote a little letter of thanks and appreciation. Immediately he sent me the most charming acknowledgment and in his turn paid me compliments which I am afraid were undeserved. Afterwards I saw him often, and he had always a winsome smile. He was inclined to stoutness and his face was completely round. Under his double chin he tied a large black *lavallière*—a loose flowing bow.

Robert de Flers was a genuine nobleman—that is to say he descended from a very ancient family. His full name was Marie-Joseph Louis Camille Robert Pellève de la Motte-Ango, Marquis de Flers, and he would sometimes show the sword worn by his ancestor at the battle of Fontenoy. In spite of his affectation of artistic négligé he looked like an aristocrat. His manners were extremely courteous though he was warm-hearted and impulsive. Always did he appear to be in high spirits, his clear blue eyes sparkling as he told an anecdote or chaffed a member of the party. His raillery was rarely malicious. Like most young men, the youthful De Flers wrote a play, "L'Habit Vert," which was a satire on the French Academy. But though he thus indulged in raillery at the expense of his future colleagues, it was not mischievous enough to prevent his election when he was still under fifty years of age.

In the third act of this play the scene is laid in the hall of the Académie Française. It was necessary that the stage manager and the scene painter should see the hall under the cupola. So Robert de Flers, the stage manager, and the scene painter, disguised themselves as American tourists—whatever that may

mean—and visited the precincts. The rest of the story should be told by De Flers:

"The decorator secretly took measurements of the galleries, benches, and statuary, muttering the while pessimistically that it would cost a fortune to reproduce the statues of Bossuet and Fenelon. Our guilty conscience did not let us tarry long; we fled, feeling like spies. The sacrilegious nature of our act was still more deeply impressed upon me when we began to rehearse the play and I realized with what profound reverence and envy the actors regarded the institution they were called upon to satirize. All of them wanted to wear the fascinating green coat! We had the greatest difficulty in pacifying, with exorbitant promises, artists condemned to play less exalted parts.

"On the first night of the play several genuine members of the Academy honored the theatre with their presence. Between the acts one of them came up to me and remarked: 'I am happy to congratulate you on your play. The *first two acts* are very amusing.' As the third act was just over, it was not difficult to divine my eminent interlocutor's opinion, which he had formulated in accordance with the purest traditions of academical malice. However, the Academy has been accustomed since its foundation to criticism, and as my comedy was not ill-natured, the Academicians bore me no grudge. At my official reception into its fold, I made a full confession, in my address, of the circumstances in which I had first penetrated beneath the cupola, and they thoroughly enjoyed the joke. I told them I was like the criminal who is mysteriously impelled to return to the scene of his crime!"

I am tempted too to quote the analogy which Robert de Flers found between playwriting and journalism. I myself heard him draw this comparison, but an American newspaperman has set down the words of Robert de Flers:

"I have always been struck by the analogy between the Press and the stage," he said. "A good newspaper story must be conceived and timed to make a definite impression on the minds of thousands of readers at a specified hour. If it fails to do this it is worthless, no matter how great its intrinsic literary merits may be, for nobody will ever read it again afterwards. It is the same with a play. Its success depends on its *immediate* effect upon a numerous public. If you write a book, it may at first pass unnoticed, but it remains, and, if it is really a good book, it will make you famous in ten, twenty, or even fifty years. But newspapers and plays have only a few hours in which to capture the public fancy. The same qualities that go to make

a successful modern playwright constitute a good newspaper editor."

It will be seen that he did not rank his literary pretensions very high. Modesty indeed was part of his charm. As Literary Director of the Figaro his articles were, in their kind, masterpieces; while his editorship of the Literary Supplement each week was admirable. There was nothing in France that approached it for interest and sure taste. Yet I remember that when I was Chief Correspondent of the Times, at a moment of great political tension between France and Great Britain, Robert de Flers was anxious to impress upon me the importance of my rôle. "The Figaro is a great newspaper," he said, "but the Times is, as it were, the elder brother of the Press. You have a most important part—I am only a *figurant*."

I do not know how far he was sincere in deprecating his own importance but certainly he used to make such remarks with a grace that was touching.

His modesty too might be deduced from the fact that he preferred to work with a collaborator in the construction of his plays, though it was generally believed that he contributed the lion's share. He had, as it were, need of a critic and a corrector—someone on whom he could lean.

In Dumas' day a theatrical manager declared: "There are two kinds of plays—those which have literary pretensions, and which usually ruin the producer—and those which are well made, and which please the public." Robert de Flers could write well, though the younger men liked to pick out his literary faults. But, above all, he aimed at sound construction. He did not believe that a play must necessarily be bad because is is successful, or that it must necessarily be good because it is a failure. His master was Victorien Sardou, perhaps the greatest exponent of the well-made play that France has had. "Madame Sans-Gêne" is still a Paris favourite.

When he was a young man he acted in comedies which were given in the salons. One day he composed a little piece whose principal interpreter was Mademoiselle Geneviève Sardou, the daughter of the dramatist. Afterwards he married her.

It was also in a salon that he met Gaston Arman de Caillavet, son of the lady who was the Egeria of Anatole France. They decided that they would work together. For sixteen years they were constant collaborators. Their ambition was to be the Meilhac and Halévy of the Third Republic, and in fact their association was as fruitful and as famous as that of their illustrious predecessors. At first they wrote operettas, which Claude

Terrasse set to music. Under the buffoonery of these joyous operettas could be discerned the blend of irony and of fantasy which developed in a series of comedies that have become classic —Les Sentiers de La Vertu, L'Ange du Foyer, Miquette et sa Mère, L'Ane de Buridan, Primerose. But the satirical plays, Le Roi, Le Bois Sacré, and L'Habit Vert, are more in the traditional comic note. They are amusing, mordant, but always pleasant. The tone is that of a well-bred man who must express himself in polite and polished sentences even when he is biting.

The war came and Robert de Flers was mobilised. He was attached to the Rumanian army. His close friendship for King Ferdinand and Queen Marie of Rumania dated from these days.

In 1915 De Caillavet died. When peace broke out Robert de Flers found a new collaborator in Francis de Croisset. It would be interesting to indulge in a long digression on the functions of a collaborator to an author who is already renowned. What does the renowned author expect from his assistant? What does the assistant hope to get from a partial surrender of his own personality?

I remember a story of two authors, X and Y. "Who really wrote the piece?" asked a boulevard wit—"X or Y?" "Don't you know?" was the reply. "It was Z, of course."

Recently in France, where literary men love to expatiate on their profession, there has been an attempt to show that the real author of Les Trois Mousquetaires was the professor Auguste Maquet, and not Dumas. There is Dumas, whose whole life was a perpetual occasion for demonstrating his extraordinary temperament, who had taken Paris by storm, who was applauded, a young man in the twenties, as the first Romanticist before Victor Hugo became his rival, who had triumphs almost unprecedented in the history of the stage, whose imagination and whose verve were unequalled—and yet it is sought to show that the plodding professor was the real author of his works.

There is an amusing anecdote told of Dumas meeting with his son. "Have you read my new book?" asked the father. "Not yet," answered the son. "Have you?"

Still, it is possible that Dumas could not have found his material so easily without Maquet, for Maquet was patient and industrious. There is plenty of evidence that Dumas, exuberant, impatient, devoured the material which was furnished him by Maquet, and continually demanded more. The subordinate but useful position of Maquet can be understood. What is more difficult to understand is the position of a collaborator who

hopes to succeed in his own person and indeed has already had considerable success.

Francis de Croisset is a man of talent. His descriptions of his journey to Ceylon would suffice to prove it. What did he bring to Robert de Flers, and what profit did his association with Robert de Flers, whose second he was, bring to him? These are questions which can be posed, but can scarcely be satisfactorily answered. The lighter papers from time to time gave humorous accounts of Robert de Flers, sitting all day long at the windows of his country house, working on a new play, while Francis de Croisset, in white trousers, indefatigably played tennis. It is an untrue picture. Francis de Croisset has won his spurs, and unquestionably contributed a great deal to the partnership.

Indeed Francis de Croisset revealed something of their method. They would talk all the evening of an act which presented difficulties. They would discuss the situation. They would work out the general scheme. They would write scraps of dialogue. They would piece them together. At two o'clock in the morning De Croisset, tired out, left De Flers; but De Flers then turned to other work. He had to write one of his articles for the Figaro. The next day after lunch De Croisset went to see De Flers. The Marquis was in good humour, smoking a cigar.

"Did you stay up long after I went?"

"Until five o'clock. I wrote my *feuilleton*. Then I tackled my correspondence."

"You have just got up?"

"No, I went to the Ministry this morning to ask for the Legion of Honour for a young confrère. Then I presided over a committee of authors."

"Are you ready for work again?"

"I am never ready for work."

"Well, it is a fine day, and we might enjoy an hour in the sunshine of the Bois."

"Let us take with us pencils and paper."

"For what purpose?"

"Why, to work in the automobile, of course."

Francis de Croisset confessed that this insatiable love of labour was too much for him. But he added that it was a joy to collaborate, since De Flers interrupted the dialogue to relate anecdotes, to recall souvenirs, and to make reflections which were altogether unexpected. The laughter of De Flers was young, fresh, irresistible.

I have referred to the generosity of De Flers in asking for

the Legion of Honour for a young confrère. The red ribbon which is the badge of the Chevalier of the Legion of Honour, though it has become common, is still highly prized. I recollect a story which was told me of Lugné-Poë, the Director of the Théâtre de l'Oeuvre, where Ibsen dramas and other foreign plays are produced. They went to Emile Buré, the Editor of the Avenir, and asked him to make a *démarche* to the Minister of Beaux-Arts. "I cannot go alone," said Buré. "Who do you suggest should accompany me?"

The inevitable name was that of Robert de Flers. Buré telephoned to De Flers, who agreed to meet him in the antechamber of the Minister. "I do not know how we are to justify our *démarche*," said De Flers, whose dramatic art was altogether different from that of Lugné-Poë. Buré defended the candidate for honours. "Really," said De Flers, "you feel like that about him?"

The door-keeper summoned them to enter the cabinet of the Minister, and De Flers, who had no admiration for Lugné-Poë, for a quarter of an hour eulogised his merits so warmly that the cause was won.

An exquisite representative of the *esprit français*. With wit went a rare grace, a rare tenderness. For thirty years he was the true image of a happy man—a man beloved by fortune whose success was merited.

Chapter IV

WIT AND HUMOUR

FRENCH WIT differs in its essence from Anglo-Saxon humour. It is more dependent on verbal felicity. It ranges from a mere happy accident of similar sound—the pun—to a shrewd criticism of society—the epigram. Always is it dependent on brilliance of language, on concise and sharp-pointed phrases. It thrusts like a rapier, and it is generally cruel. It wounds and mocks: it laughs at its object.

Whereas Anglo-Saxon humour is dependent rather on a kindly comprehension of human folly, and in concerning itself with absurdities displays human feeling. It sees the comic side of a situation and of a character but it does not necessarily execute the person. It laughs with and not at its object, and with its tender sensibility is not far removed from poetry.

These definitions must not be taken too literally, especially as they are applied to French and Anglo-Saxon writers. If Shakespeare is the supreme humourist, whose humour is a kind of poetry, Swift with his bitter sarcasm, his fierce irony, is a wit who insults and shames our poor human dignity. Rabelais, lusty, roaring, robust, intensely sympathetic, might well be Anglo-Saxon. But Voltaire is the true type of French wit, lively, volatile, making his swift swordplay as a polished man of the world.

I have met two Frenchmen who share these French and Anglo-Saxon qualities. They are Tristan Bernard and Georges Courteline. Bernard is the greater wit: Courteline is the greater humourist. Bernard is gayer, and Courteline is deeper. Bernard wishes us to laugh, Courteline wishes to move us.

If indeed I were asked to name the wittiest man I have ever known I should not hesitate to reply—Tristan Bernard. Yet he too has something of the Anglo-Saxon appreciation of humour. Somehow he contrives to blend the flashing French epigram with the rounder spirit of fun which is common to English and Americans. Moreover he does not excel merely in *bons mots* of his own invention: he has also a ready fund of anecdotes which he can recount at the appropriate moment. A raconteur as well as a wit. His manner is inimitable. It is a trifle grave, it is somewhat indolent. His voice drawls as he sprawls.

His big black beard—now grizzled—is one of the institutions of Paris. It is known to the street urchin as well as to the frequenter of first nights. His dishevelled hair, his large collar, his bulky frame, make him the butt of the writers of revues in the little theatres. It is true fame in Paris to be impersonated in the cabarets. To this height of celebrity Tristan Bernard has attained.

Here are two specimens of his verbal wit. Speaking of Venice he remarked "Paris would not be so bad either, if the Municipal Council would only open up the sewers." Whoever has visited Venice will recognize the justice of this implied criticism. When a former collaborator passed him without salutation, he murmured, "Poor A——! he is so changed that he does not recognise me."

He tells the story of the Prince de —— who became irresponsible in his old age. His favourite epithet was "vache." He hurled it at everybody who entered his house. He held the ladies in especial horror. As his favourite seat was on the verandah of his Paris mansion, it was scarcely possible for feminine callers to escape this bovine appellation.

Thereupon his wife placed upon the lawn a miniature painted cow. A lady would pass. "Vache!" exploded the Prince. The Princess smiled at her guests. "Poor dear!" she murmured, "his thoughts wander always to the country. He used to be so fond of his cattle. You see, he has a little painted cow to remind him of those days, and he is always shouting to it."

He was persuaded by his friends to become a candidate for the Académie Française. That did not prevent him from relating the story of Léon Gozlan who, when he was a candidate, making the traditional tour of the members to solicit their votes, was badly received by one of the immortals.

"I am not even aware that there is a vacant fauteuil," growled the Academician.

"Monsieur," responded Gozlan, regarding him ferociously, "the seat that I am seeking is your own."

When he lived at Versailles he missed, one night, his last train. He asked a chauffeur how much he wanted to make the journey to Versailles.

"Forty francs," replied the chauffeur (this was before the war).

"Forty francs," repeated Tristan Bernard. "That is far too much. Get in the cab, and I will drive you there myself for twenty francs."

I like too the story of the valet who from time to time was

allowed to sell the unsolicited books which were sent by publishers and authors to his master. Everybody who has obtained a certain position in letters in France is inundated by these unwelcome gifts—some of them from known authors, but most of them from the great unknown. It is impossible to keep them all. Therefore they are periodically thinned out and usually find their way to the second-hand bookshops and to the boxes along the quays. Usually there are extravagant dedications on the fly-leaf. It is thought proper to tear out these fulsome compliments, lest the author should discover how lightly prized are his works. But this particular valet found that the dedication sometimes gave a greater value to the book. Therefore he not only neglected to remove the fly-leaves, but when a book was received that was not signed, he would sign it in the name of the author himself. Thus one might have picked up on the quays a new edition of Terence with the inscription:

To my beloved and venerated Master,
Anatole France.
From his friend,
Terence.

Old Parisians bewail the disappearance of the boulevardier. Certainly he is rarer. He was proud of his *esprit*. He treated everything lightly. There was a spice of malice in his appreciations. He knew all the latest scandals. A clever comment was his delight. To be admitted into the company of singers, scribes, and men about town, with whom mingled fashionable actresses, it was necessary to be picturesque, to be distinguished, and to have a sprightly tongue. It was sometimes desirable also to have a sprightly sword. Alas! the race has been dispersed in the modern bustle, and the younger French writers are serious-minded persons. They have neither the leisure nor the inclination to linger in the cafés and to turn brilliant phrases. Occasionally there are literary quarrels but they are dull solemn incidents and always does one suspect the sad young men of seeking a little publicity.

Diversions these literary duels veritably used to be. The sword-play was as witty and courteous in form as the tongue-play. One is forced to conclude that that *l'esprit* and *l'épée* were two phases of the same manners that have been almost extinguished in these superficially frivolous but really sombre times.

Tristan Bernard is no duellist, though he is the President of the Sporting Club of France which, in the rue de l'Elysée, brought together the young and the old bloods of Paris, and

where one could fence and box and swim and practise other manly arts. But at least he has tried to maintain traditions that Parisians, young enough to be his sons and his grandsons, despise. They look upon life gloomily. Tristan Bernard takes life gaily. They are overburdened with problems which they cannot solve—social problems, aesthetic problems, and practical problems posed by the high cost of living, the housing shortage, the prevalent perversions, and the supposed need of "arriving," of selling scores of thousands of their books, of getting rich quick, of struggling to raise their heads above their fellows as do snakes in a basket.

Perhaps I should not generalise. There are bright blades still to be found, though it is true that for the most part the younger men are prematurely weary and woebegone. Among them, Tristan Bernard, with his sixty odd years, seems a survivor of another age. The circumstances often lend a humour to his jokes that can scarcely be found in the words themselves. Rather is it his attitude that is comic. He refuses ever to be upset. He declines to become excited. Thus when there was question of the banks closing on the eve of the war, Tristan Bernard went to the Banque de France, drew out all the cash that he had, and leaving with his pockets bulging, remarked to the door-keeper, "Now, my friend, you can close up if you like."

The jest has an acrid flavour—it was directed against himself, against the Parisians who were showing signs of alarm, and against the inherent selfishness of mankind. In less tragic conditions he has the same calm sarcasm. For example, he took one of the few fiacres still left in Paris. The horse suddenly began to rear, paw the air, kick the traces; then it fell on its knees, and finally it lay down on the ground. Tristan Bernard alighted, and instead of being angry, asked the cocher: "Are those all the tricks it knows?"

Always is he in this good humour. Always does he utter a suitable drollery. In a restaurant he called the waiter. "Garçon! I cannot eat this soup." The waiter removed it and presented the menu. Bernard chose another soup. "Garçon! I cannot eat this potage!" The waiter brought the manager. "I cannot understand, Monsieur; my clients find this potage good and compliment me on it." "I say nothing to the contrary," responded Bernard, "but I have no spoon!"

Another anecdote which he loves to relate concerns his method of dealing with a fellow traveller who rudely told him that he must not smoke in the compartment. "I shall do as

I please," returned Tristan Bernard. "We shall see," retorted the traveller and he brought the train attendant. Tristan Bernard continued to smoke tranquilly while the complaint was being made. When the attendant asked him what he had to say he replied, "First of all will you be good enough to ask this gentleman to show his ticket?" It was a second-class ticket that was produced and the complainant was ejected from the first-class carriage.

The other passengers, enjoying the discomfiture of the fussy gentleman, at last asked Tristan Bernard how he knew that his quarrelsome neighbour had only a second-class ticket. "It is very simple. He had his ticket in his waistcoat pocket, and I saw that it was the same colour as my own."

He laughs at his own failures. When one of his plays was unsuccessful a friend asked for a fauteuil. "No," said Tristan, "I am not giving fauteuils—I will give you a whole row." To another friend he sent, with the tickets, a little note: "It would be prudent to come armed with a revolver because the place is deserted."

He mocks at the tendency of Paris theatre managers to exaggerate the number of performances. "They celebrated the hundredth performance of my play," he said, "on the eightieth representation—which was in fact only the fiftieth."

He likewise mocks at the snobbish pretence that good plays do not succeed. "Is playwriting an art? Or is it a commerce? It is an art when one registers failures. It is a commerce when one makes money." Again, he aptly described the common experience of first nights. "At the theatre when one's friends attend the *répétition générale,* the piece is a triumph in the auditorium, is remarkable in the lobbies, is good in the cloakroom, is passable at the exit, and is a complete failure on the boulevards."

There is surely a disenchanted philosophy of life in these witticisms. Bernard is not pretentious himself, and he pricks pretensions in others. He is an honest writer who frankly aims at amusing the public—and in having a good time while doing so.

He practised at the bar in the early nineties, but soon began to contribute articles and sketches to the Paris papers. One of them was Gil Blas, of which I have a collection that is a perpetual joy. There have been few publications so consistently interesting as Gil Blas, and certainly there is nothing which can compare with it today. In it were the best drawings of Steinlen, stories by De Maupassant, Gustave Coquiot, Jules Renard,

Paul Ginisty, Henri Lavedan, Georges Courteline, Pierre Veber, Jean Richepin, Emile Zola. I give these names at random. The price was one sou a copy for the highest talent in writing and illustration then available.

Then his plays began to appear. L'Anglais Tel Qu'On Le Parle has become a classic. To enumerate his productions would fill several pages. Those that are best known are Triplepatte, Le Petit Café, Le Prince Charmant, Les Petites Curieuses. Then there are his novels, his essays, and his reminiscences. It is interesting to note how often he has written about sport, and particularly about boxing.

I have spoken of his Presidency of the Sporting-Club. That club is a splendidly equipped establishment facing the Elysée. André Glarner, once a champion runner, and afterwards one of the best-known bilingual journalists in France, introduced me to this circle, and indeed there was question of holding a weekly luncheon over which I then presided in the building. Unfortunately, after several meals had been taken there, it was proposed to have Joseph Cailleaux as our guest. Cailleaux had not been rehabilitated in the eyes of his compatriots, and several of the members of the Sporting-Club protested. Whatever one may think of Cailleaux, it was obviously impossible to continue to hold the luncheons in a place where our guests would be submitted to the censorship of a committee. Bernard himself would not have raised any such objection for he is a liberal-minded man. Yet we deemed it unnecessary and undignified to combat the protest. It was easier to leave the club.

There one met such men as Gaston Vidal, a famous football player who was given a Ministerial post in the French Government. He was unofficially known as the Minister of Sports, for his influence was exercised in inducing the schools to take up games. It is altogether wrong to suppose that France is not a sporting country. Cycling was from the beginning adopted by Frenchmen far more readily than by men and women of any other nation, and even the motor-car has not destroyed the nation-wide interest in the annual tour of France, in the Six Days Race at the Vélodrome d'Hiver, in the scores of established events which are witnessed by all classes of French society, and in the annual Tour de France. Then France was foremost in automobile racing, and of the French exploits in the air it is superfluous to speak here. As for boxing Carpentier many years ago led the way. In tennis the French have produced such world-beaters as Suzanne Lenglen, Lacoste, Borotra, Brugnon and Cochet. Probably more men enjoy the pleasures of *la chasse*

in France than in any other country, while the French fishermen are not to be numbered. Football too is much played. Yet though it would be possible to make out a good case for France in sports, it is true that the schools did not encourage organised games until Gaston Vidal began to advocate them.

To the Club of Tristan Bernard flocked men who had accomplished remarkable feats in many different sports.

There were besides such famous lawyers as Moro-Giafferi, an eloquent Corsican. There were actors, and writers, and distinguished men-about-town, and race-horse owners, and a crowd of newspapermen.

Like most French clubs, however, there was in the premises a gaming-room, and it was this gaming-room which caused the status of the Club to be challenged. It appears that the municipal provisions governing the property which is opposite the Elysée Palace, the residence of the President of the Republic, stipulate that it must be utilised only for domestic tenancies. Therefore an action was taken to turn out the members.

This was one of the *causes célèbres* of recent years. It gave Tristan Bernard an opportunity to return to the bar which he had quitted thirty years before. He made an ardent appeal, enlightened however with his usual humour. Judge, officials and public thoroughly enjoyed his speech. Bernard stroked his long beard, demonstrated the social value of the work done by the Club in encouraging sport, in providing facilities for young men to indulge in athletic propensities. Alas! the law is the law; and the verdict went against the Club. This does not necessarily mean that it will be turned out of its home, for the law's delays are proverbial in France.

Tristan Bernard has kept out of politics but he has original ideas of a political character. "The older a writer grows the more Radical he should become. Usually it is the other way round. In France the young men start out as anarchists, and gradually become rigid Conservatives as they acquire fame and fortune. I become more extreme—or at least have sympathies with the extremists—as I grow older. The fountain of eternal youth is perpetual curiosity and love of change."

Bernard was acquainted with Toulouse-Lautrec, the grotesque little hunchback who sat solitary in the gay nocturnal haunts of Montmartre, and portrayed their habitués with pitiless precision. Toulouse-Lautrec, an outcast, was fond of boasting that he was a lineal descendant of the powerful Counts of Toulouse.

Toulouse-Lautrec and Tristan Bernard possessed in common

a delight in sport—particularly in horse-racing and wrestling. It is queer to think of this poor deformed creature obsessed by dreams of athletic feats. Bernard has preserved his affection for athletics. There are few cycle races or boxing matches where his familiar beard is not to be seen; and to him is due in large measure the elevation of these sports into social events.

Georges Courteline offers a curious contrast to Bernard. The Prince of Humourists—that is the title given to him by his admirers. When I knew him he was already aged in appearance. He looked older than his years warranted. His active production had ceased. A little withered man in a shabby frock-coat, he came timidly into a Montparnasse assembly from his home on the outskirts of Paris—one of those districts in which rentiers, retired from the city, placidly smoke their pipes on the benches and gossip of the past. His face was of an unhealthy yellow, the skin drawn tightly over his cheek-bones, the temples shining like old ivory. He pulled nervously at a tiny moustache. Somehow he suggested a retired army officer. I have seen many such pensioned captains.

In point of fact Courteline—the son of Jules Moineau, author of Tribunaux Comiques—spent only a few days in the army. He was promptly rejected as unfit for service. Yet he had found time to observe the pompous and brutal adjutant, the stupid and illiterate soldiers, whom he afterwards immortalised in Le Train de 8h.47 and in Les Gaietés de l'Escadron. After the regiment, the administrative bureau. Courteline became one of France's million functionaries. The French functionary he also satirised—in Messieurs Les Ronds-de-Cuir.

For a long time he devoted himself to the theatre. Boubouroche, which he wrote at this period, is the type of the foolish bourgeois. The light-headed Paris girls are depicted in Les Linottes. Certainly there are in the series of plays and stories which he carefully chiselled, characters that are as representative as some of the characters of Molière. Courteline has the true comic gift—and he has a scrupulous respect for the French language.

In his own world—the world of the barracks, the bureau, and the corner seat of the café—he saw, as Molière saw in a more exalted sphere, the amusing trait. He is amused at the mediocrity of his heroes. They express themselves with vehemence, and Courteline, with never-failing verve, places them in situations where they reveal their faults.

His business, as he himself said, was to find the proper pretext for his personages to evolve in conformity with the logic

of their little psychology—to write "little histories, with little beginnings, little middles, and little ends." These little personages reflect the philosophy of Courteline—that of taking nothing seriously. It will be seen that Courteline has a modest view of his own art. He is, according to his own description, "a sculptor of umbrella handles."

Few writers have been so loved by their friends as Courteline. Franc-Nohain, for example, who has constructed the most pleasant fables in verse after the manner of LaFontaine, speaks of him with veneration. After he went to live at Saint-Mandé, in a sunny apartment, there was a perpetual procession of Parisian friends to his humble abode. There was Lucien Descaves, the author of a satire on the army, Sous-Offs—one of those anti-militarist books which from time to time scandalise the authorities; Jeanne Granier, the actress, now old but once the liveliest comédienne in France; Jane Catulle-Mendès, widow of the popular story-teller; Georges Pioch, poet and revolutionary, though a perfectly harmless revolutionary, whose full-moon face and round paunch is known to everybody who frequents the Boulevards; the kind-hearted newspaper woman Séverine who battled for Boulanger and for Dreyfus alike, and now looks like Dolly Vardon grown into grandmother; Antoine, the founder of the Théâtre Libre, who, after his failure as Director of the Odéon, turned dramatic critic; Edmond Haraucourt, formerly Curator of the Musée de Cluny, wearing an eternal white stock, and author, in one of his poems, of the most quoted line of modern times—

"Partir, c'est mourir un peu";

Pierre Wolff, the bald-headed, hooked-nosed dramatist—and I know not whom besides. All of them one encountered constantly, for they were the chief figures in a certain slightly demoded section of Paris life. All of them were, so to speak, survivors of an earlier age—an age which, through the spectacles of sentiment, appears heroic.

Courteline spoke with a strong *faubourien* accent—that is to say, the accent of the working people; and he loved to make use of familiar phrases which would be adjudged vulgar in cultured society. That is an affectation of his generation. Literary men and women tried in this way to escape from the literary manners of Academic folk. There was for them something attractive, something real, in this imitation of the populace. However well they wrote, they liked to speak a crude language.

"Montmartre! Ah! the Montmartre of other days!" sadly exclaimed Courteline on one occasion. "The other day I saw in the papers that Adèle, who kept the Auberge des Assassins—otherwise the Lapin à Gill, because of a life-like Rabbit that the illustrator Gill painted on the door—now the Lapin Agile kept by Frédé—is dead. . . . I was ten years old in 1870, when the Commune was declared. I lived with my parents in the house next to that in which Clément Thomas and Leconte were shot. . . . Montmartre was then the country. Eight months of the year one lived in the Faubourg Poissonnière, and in the summer went to the Butte, where I remember a great farm with cows and pigs and fruit and vegetable gardens . . .

"The war? I do not believe in the influence of the war on literature. The world goes its own way—that is to say, men and women attend to their own little affairs. So do the writers."

As for his conception of humour, Courteline is in accord with Gaston de Pawlowski, the clever critic of Le Journal. "Humour is a constant criticism of those things which the world believes to be stable. But humour does not tend to any conclusion. It simply indicates that one must not conclude. Humour does not pretend to judge—it places itself above mere judgments. It is the ironic laughter of the gods surveying human absurdities."

When the Académie Goncourt was founded as a counter-blast to the Académie Française Courteline was not elected. Most of the members were the adversaries of Courteline. To be perfectly honest those members, who were the rivals of the Academicians, can hardly be described as giants. There were Gustave Geoffroy, Léon Hennique, Elémir Bourges, who spent conscientiously ten years of labour on each of his novels, and other minor men. There was Henri Céard who described Boubouroche as "a trivial pleasantry." Indeed Courteline had only two partisans at the Académie Goncourt—Léon Daudet, the son of Alphonse Daudet, and Lucien Descaves.

Descaves was so incensed at the opposition to Courteline—a bigger man than any of them with the possible exception of Léon Daudet—that he refused to attend the meetings. To the annual luncheon where the novel of the year was chosen and crowned, Descaves sent his vote by post. Courteline himself declared that nothing would persuade him ever to cross the threshold of the Académie. Thus, alas! the Académie Goncourt, like the Académie Française, soon became a group of nonentities indulging in petty intrigues.

Two years ago the Académie changed its opinion, and elected

Courteline. Courteline was induced to forget his resentment. But Descaves continued to sulk.

One droll idea of Courteline which he pursued for many years was to collect the most horrible daubs that he could find in the popular markets and in the shops of the *brocanteurs*. He constituted a Musée des Horreurs of paintings. They crowded the walls of his room. Among them were two pictures of the Douanier Rousseau, which he had bought, with the frames, for 200 francs. When the Douanier Rousseau was suddenly boosted into fame by the genial joker Guillaume Apollinaire, and his naïve tableaux were sold by the art-dealers to rich snobs for prices which went as high as half a million francs, Courteline discovered that he had unhappily disposed of these precious paintings.

But there were others, and imagining that a fortune was to be made out of paintings which he had bought because they were so bad, Courteline decided to sell the rest. They did in fact fetch fair prices, though scarcely as much as might have been expected in these days of pictural nonsense. It is not enough that a painting should be bad and grotesque. Its author must be properly boomed.

The real treasures of Courteline were not of course for sale —the admirable Steinlens, the joyous Willettes, the caricatures of André Gill, the curious Caran d'Aches, which recalled the old days of Montmartre. There were besides the Rops, evoking the libertinage of an epoch when *vieux beaux* flirted with the danseuses of the Opéra, Daumiers, depicting the contemporaries of Thiers, Carrier-Belleuses, which challenged comparison with the pictures of Degas, yellow lithographs of Toulouse-Lautrec which have fixed the cancan period.

The buffoonery of those paintings I found irresistible. No wonder they appealed to Courteline. It is a pity that they are now dispersed, for they were as humorous a commentary on modern art as any book which Courteline has written on barracks, bureaux, and bourgeois households. . . . How strange to think that that which was regarded by the collector as the last word in artistic imbecility and incompetence should now be taken seriously!

What I like about Courteline is his freedom from all the tricks of the man of letters. He has had many men of letters in his circle; but they entered because of other qualities than those of authorship.

I sympathise with this view of literary craftsmen. One evening a gushing lady brought to my house a famous author.

For an hour she kept on repeating that it was wonderful to know writers—that they were so interesting, so intelligent, so entertaining—and so on. The famous author beamed. At last, unable to stand it any longer, in my exasperation I brutally said: "Madame, you are entirely mistaken. Authors in general are dull dogs. They are conceited but speechless. They are full of vain tricks. They demand admiration and they may deserve it—afar off. But usually they keep the best of themselves for their books. It is there, not in real life, that one should associate with them; and the company of the honest bricklayer is infinitely to be preferred to the company of a tongue-tied or affected writing man." She subsided. The famous author scowled.

For the most part Courteline has moved among the common people; and if he has depicted them comically it is that he likes them. Not for him the elegant salons, or even the literary cafés. To the cafés he went to play his daily game of cards; but those who took a hand with him might be the tradesmen of the quarter, the bourgeois of simple tastes. The old Montmartre he loved; but not its cénacles, its quarrelsome "schools." He writes about the little people—the good little people—but he does not despise them for all their foibles. It is rather the littérateurs whom he despises—and the snobs.

Yet even for the littérateurs and the snobs he has a good word. One saw him in the foyer at first nights, his straw hat on his head; and when the others had each their envious criticism he would smile indulgently. He had only sympathy for the unhappy author, in swallow-tail coat, trembling and perspiring, awaiting the verdict of the public. As for the snobs—"Why, the snobs are useful to art. What would we do without them? They applaud indiscriminately and they sometimes do harm. But how often they help the author—especially the new author who tries to be original! That is better than the spirit of routine which only applauds what is established or what is conventional."

And I must faithfully report the Courtelinesque conception of authorship: "The writer has failed if he does not satisfy at once the simple and the sophisticated—if he does not entertain soldiers and servants, well-read and cultivated men and women. That is the problem—not merely to be admired of the crowd, not merely to be admired of the élite; but to be so human that the crowd and the élite recognise and enjoy the truth expressed with pleasant skill."

He is free from all affectation. His home life is the home life of the honest bourgeois. "Marie-Louise" he cries from his wheeled chair—for he has lately had to submit to the amputation of a leg—"Marie-Louise, here are visitors. Bring in the coffee and the cards."

Chapter V

SHOULD THE INTELLECTUAL ENTER POLITICS?

JULIEN BENDA, one of the most thoughtful of French writers, who has "popularised" philosophy, but though making it comprehensible to the average intelligence of the hurried man and woman still maintains an uncompromising standard, has lately posed an important question. Should the intellectual enter politics?

His own reply is in the negative. Why? One would have imagined that politics had great need of the thinker. Yes, but politics, according to him, make it impossible for the intellectual to keep his integrity. His business is not to win elections or appeal to popular suffrage. His business is to guard the torch of truth.

If he makes concessions to the public whims, if he condescends to the forum, he is lost. It is for others to make the best of things as they momentarily appear. He must direct his attention to things as they eternally are.

That is what the older "clercs," as he calls them, did. So, at least, he asserts. It is scarcely an accurate assertion. Dante, for example, was greatly concerned with the politics of his day, and his "Divine Comedy," which is a poem and nothing but a poem for us, was probably a political tract for him as well as a poem. There are plenty of other cases just as striking that could be cited.

Still, there is certainly a sense in which literary men—and Frenchmen above all—have abandoned the ideal and have descended to the real. The general contention of Benda that many French writers of the generation that is passing threw themselves into the fray to the detriment of their art is sound enough. In this, he says, they "betrayed" their trust.

There is evidence that the younger men are in reaction against this confusion of politics with literature. The other day a score of the younger men were questioned as to their attitude towards politics—and they replied, almost unanimously, that they were not interested in politics. Indeed, they expressed themselves as disgusted with the idea of democracy.

However this may be, Benda is chiefly angry with men like Charles Maurras and Maurice Barrès. Both of them I have known; and I will relate here some of my experiences with

Barrès who, though particularly cultured and sensitive in the artistic sense, a self-conscious stylist, did not disdain the political arena. He was perhaps a patriot first, and a hedonist second. He made a corner in intellectual patriotism.

"Are you man enough to come so far out as Neuilly?" wrote Maurice Barrès to me one day. If I was man enough to make the trip to the Boulevard Maillot he promised that we should have a good talk together. Thus he thought of his abode on the outskirts of Paris as remote from the feverish center. In point of fact, one could reach it in a quarter of an hour by taxicab from the Chamber of Deputies!

The terms of this note seem to me significant. They suggest a total separation in the mind of Barrès between his active life in political and newspaper circles, and his literary life in the quietude of his charming villa at Neuilly. Paris stood in his imagination for something vastly different from Neuilly. Geographically, Neuilly is only a suburb of Paris. Spiritually, the two places are not connected.

This is not a fanciful reading of my own. The next book he sent to me bore the following dedication in French:

"Souvenir, mon cher confrère, de votre visite à Neuilly."

He added a word of political import. He declared that there was a perfect understanding between us for the maintenance of the friendship of France with Anglo-Saxon countries. But the chief point is that Neuilly, for him, was a far-off place.

And indeed it was. Many times had I spoken to him in the lobbies of the Chamber, and had watched him from my seat in the gallery. There he sat, this man of letters, in some respects the most distinguished and delicate man of letters in France, among a higgledy-piggledy assembly of members of Parliament, many of them coarse, pugnacious, petty, intriguing, ready to bang the lids of their desks, and to shout down an unfortunate speaker, ready even to resort to fisticuffs. What was Maurice Barrès doing in that galère? Refined, poetical, in some ways effeminate, with a horror of noise and of demonstrativeness, he was obviously hurt by the commotion. He looked on with aristocratic aloofness. He did not endeavour to conceal his contempt. Certainly he was not popular, this haughty littérateur, in the Chamber. His talent was respected. His influence in conservative quarters was immense. But he showed his sensitiveness, his disgust for the hubbub, far too openly to be truly admitted into the confraternity of politicians.

I have always wondered how he managed to conduct the stormy public meetings which mark the general elections in

France. He represented the First Arrondissement of Paris—that is to say, the districts around the Markets, with their rough population. André Tardieu, a man of exceptional intelligence, but of robust and even brutal temperament, has often related to me incidents of his own elections. He was prepared to give tit-for-tat. When he was interrupted he would retort violently. He would address his interrupter in the familiar second person—tu and toi—thou and thee—and, as he confessed to me, the whole art of repartee in such public meetings does not consist in being witty, but in being unmercifully insulting. If an interrupter hints that you are mistaken, you reply that he is an imbecile, that perhaps he has a criminal motive.

"Take your hands out of your pockets," a boor cried.

"What! Because you want to put yours in?"

That is the kind of retort that is effective.

It does not sound very clever, but it is not always easy to keep one's presence of mind and to reply unhesitatingly. Such methods irk an intelligent man. Yet they have an extraordinary power over the populace. They seem to demonstrate your superiority far better than the careful exposition of a subject. It is not logic that is needed; it is not even persuasiveness—it is sheer assertion, and if the assertion is made in the vulgarest terms so much the better. I had myself a short political experience and know enough of the public platform to realise the value of a rough answer creating a momentary uproar which quickly turns in favour of the speaker. What is true of France, is true of other democratic countries, such as Great Britain and America.

I recall one example which occurred in France. Questions had been invited from the audience. A member of the audience put a perfectly proper but awkward question concerning a certain Bill.

The audience cheered the questioner. I regarded the candidate with some anxiety.

But he was equal to the occasion. In a thunderous voice he asked the questioner, "Have you read the Bill?"

"Well," began the questioner.

"There is no 'well' about it. Yes or no? Have you read the Bill?"

"Only as it was reported in the papers. But . . . "

"The papers, the papers! And you dare to challenge me after reading a newspaper summary? I have studied the Bill. Have you? Yes or No?"

The poor man was overwhelmed. He had received no answer

to his question. The audience did not appear to notice that the orator was evading the issue, and applauded him to the echo. Thereupon the orator proceeded to follow up his advantage. He denounced ignorant critics who with amazing presumption endeavoured to overthrow the efforts of men who were devoting their nights and days to the public weal. His triumph was complete. For my part I hardly knew whether to be amused at the cheapness of this forensic device, or to be distressed at the stupidity of the public.

Everybody who has taken the smallest part in public life has witnessed such scenes. The Buzfuz style of oratory still prevails. How then could Maurice Barrès, whose writings show his perfect appreciation of the most subtle nuances, face the electors of Les Halles?

It is true that Anatole France was occasionally induced to speak, or rather read a paper, but when he appeared on the platform it was before an audience of sympathisers, and the way was carefully prepared. His pronouncements were *ex cathedra*. The audiences were overawed.

Barrès too had a reputation but he was really in the arena where his reputation could hardly serve him. In some sense it was a disadvantage, for his electors, working men, were suspicious of this superior person who sought their suffrages.

It is true also that Chateaubriand the Magnificent, whom Barrès looked upon as his illustrious precursor, entered politics; but Chateaubriand came in by another door, between ranks of powdered footmen. Lamartine, Victor Hugo, other great writers, played their part in the storm and stress of their time, but they too had not to face audiences conscious of the possession of the universal suffrage.

To be frank, the appearances of Barrès on the public platform were lamentable. He spoke in a falsetto voice. He was like a baritone trying to sing an air composed for a tenor. He was long, lanky, and clumsy. His contemptuous face, yellow, small, was thrown back in an attitude of defiance. His eyes, with heavy eyelids, were half closed. His nose, sharp and prominent, sniffed scornfully. The small moustache above the receding chin did not make him prepossessing. His straight black hair fell in ragged meshes, and one mesh barred his forehead romantically. His gestures were those of a puppet. Never have I seen anybody whose limbs appeared to be so wooden. The arms moved in staccato fashion, as though pulled by an inexpert manipulator. It was marvellous that he made any impression at all.

In his audiences were those who were acquainted with his work. Thus one day an interrupter demanded if he had not written in the "Mort de Venise," that Venice was the finest city in the world.

Barrès could not deny it. Tardieu would have asked for chapter and verse, and have confused his antagonist. Or he would have turned the laughter against his antagonist by asserting that in Venice were not to be found idiots of his kind. But Barrès was silent.

"And Paris? Where does Paris come in?" bawled the interrupter. Local as well as national patriotism is quickly stirred.

After the meeting he tried to repair his mistake by drinking on the zinc-covered bar of the bistrot—the low café described by Zola. He told the electors who gathered round him: "I certainly wrote that phrase, but I had just discovered Venice, I had not the habit of travelling, I was enthusiastic, I was young . . . "

He repeated, with a comic accent of contrition, "Yes, I was young, I did not know any better . . . "

He performed these duties which must have galled him because he had acquired a religion—the religion of La Patrie. La Patrie was for him a person to be loved. He began with the *culte du moi*—the cult of himself: he believed that nobody had anything better to do than to cultivate his own personality, that the ego was all. Presently he found that the ego must have its roots in some soil. It is not detached from time and space. It is the result of heredity and environment, which for Barrès could be summed up in one word—Patrie. Thus he was a Nationalist of the Nationalists, though Patrie was only Moi writ large.

He came under the influence of Déroulède, orator and chansonnier, who tried to be the Béranger of his generation—a Béranger with a message. That message was La Revanche. France had been defeated in 1870 by Germany. France had lost Alsace and a portion of Lorraine. France must take her revenge and recover Alsace-Lorraine. France should indeed annex the Rhineland. The frontier between France and Germany should be the great river.

Déroulède had an enormous influence over his generation of Frenchmen. Barrès continued that influence. Under his banner of Nationalism rallied all those who had a spark of pride, all those who did not, as is often the manner of the French, fly to the opposite extreme and become more German than the Germans.

For there was, and is, a considerable class of Frenchmen who, not content to denounce patriotism as a man-made goddess with insatiable maw, practice a kind of inverted patriotism. They worship the idol of anti-patriotism. They find anything that Germany does good. They would make every concession to German diplomacy. They would make every concession to German literature. They worship the Nordic man, and despise the Latin man of whom they are poor specimens.

That is why Scandinavia—a Nordic country—came in for its share of admiration. The esthetes of both sexes vibrated to the dramas of Ibsen and shrieked against the classical theatrical repertory of France. Molière was swept away by Björnson, and Henry Becque, the finest dramatist that France has produced for half a century, could not hold his own against Hauptmann. From Montmartre to the Quartier Latin, French intellectuals depreciated French intellect, and extolled German and Scandinavian intellect. In the successive Ministries were men who would have sacrificed the dearest possessions of France at the bidding of Germany. I do not know whether it is more accurate to describe French Nationalism as a necessary though excessive reaction against French Radicalism, or to describe French Radicalism as an inevitable though extravagant reaction against French Nationalism.

In any case, Barrès, the luxurious Barrès, the refined Barrès, the artistic Barrès, threw himself into the fight because he was appalled at the folly of the French Germanophiles. So he received his electors in a modest room in an old quarter of Paris. It was on the second floor of a tumble-down house that his political offices were placed. The beflowered wall-paper was in the worst taste. Clad in black, emaciated, his saffron face crowned by disorderly black hair, he would welcome his visitors.

The Roman Catholics claimed him as a zealous adherent. But, of course, Barrès, the beloved of the Church, which associated itself with Nationalism, was intellectually Agnostic. He had been brought up as a Catholic, had been baptised, had taken his *première communion,* and there could be no question of his formal religion. Yet in his writings there are traces of Taine and of Renan, and something more—something of a decadent Paganism. Nevertheless Barrès was convinced of the historical importance of Catholicism in the formation of French society.

Barrès therefore defended the Church. He was the champion of the Church. Some of his finest pages are those in which he

pleads for the churches of France. They are signs of civilisation. They are beautiful. Is not that enough?

His attitude towards Renan is not easily defined. He is both for and against him. Anatole France one day put the matter clearly when he said to Barrès:

"You did not go to the inauguration of the statue of Renan because it was intended as an anti-Catholic manifestation. But if there had been unveiled a Renan of bronze in the courtyard of the free Collège de France, would you not have attended?"

And Barrès replied simply: "Yes."

He was in fact present at the centenary celebrations of Renan at the Sorbonne. Everybody seemed to be annoyed and puzzled. Alexandre Millerand, then President of the Republic, could not refuse to take the chair, but he was embarrassed. One of the speakers—representing the Collège de France—referred, I remember, to the Ministerial decree which dismissed Renan from his professorial post. The official representatives moved uneasily.

"That decree brought together two names—that of the Minister and that of the Professor. One of them has the happy chance of being forgotten. The other is immortal."

Barrès read his discourse. He read it badly, monotonously, wearily. But he dexterously avoided the pitfalls of his subject. Pale, in his green academic dress, he acquitted himself skilfully.

Imitating Chateaubriand, he made his tour of Syria. In this connection he asked Louis Bertrand, who has a considerable knowledge of the Near East, for his advice. Bertrand, who was then candidate for the Académie, hurried to the Boulevard Maillot, formidably armed with his documentation, and prepared to tell Barrès everything about the Levant. To his surprise Barrès brushed his offer of information aside.

"All I want," he said, "is a list of the best hotels."

Bertrand left angrily.

When the story was repeated to Barrès he appeared astonished.

"What else should I wish to know? Is it not much to know where I can stay without encountering fleas and bugs? For the rest I have need of nobody."

I too talked with him in his study in the Boulevard Maillot. There he asked for my help in recovering the scattered stones which had belonged to the Cathedral of Rheims. Those stones had been picked up after the war and taken to America and to England. Maurice Barrès undertook to collect the broken

fragments of the sanctuary—the monumental hymn which the masons and sculptors of the Thirteenth Century composed with joy and patience. How lovingly he spoke of these stones of Rheims!

I see him now, sitting before a log fire, his long bony legs outstretched, his thin arms moving spasmodically. He talked jerkily. He rose abruptly and went over to his paper-strewn desk.

With tender care he took from its nest of littered papers the carven head of an angel which he had just succeeded in finding. It was in itself a beautiful head, but it seemed still more beautiful when one thought of those medieval workers who had lovingly fashioned it long centuries before. I handled it with reverence, almost with awe. It appeared incredible that the mere curio-hunter could keep such precious *morceaux* on his mantel-piece. They were interesting—too interesting—as curiosities. But their rightful place was among their fellow-stones, and their true value depended upon their remaining where they were put seven hundred years ago.

Some of these missing arms and heads have since been sent back to the architect, who is reconstructing the shattered edifice. An American who had purchased the head of a prophet in Italy, on learning its origin, generously brought it back to the ecclesiastical authorities. A number of Frenchmen returned statues and portions of statues. A great assembly of hands and broken limbs had to be sifted and classified. Much that appears to be useless *débris* of sculpture will be arranged in order.

It is certain, Barrès told me, that dispersed all over the world are precious parts belonging to the stone population of the Cathedral. Everywhere in the great edifice, in the most inaccessible places, were communities of prophets and of angels, of saints and of virgins, joining their eternal praise to the multitudinous hosanna of the architectural pile. There are probably a score of thousands of modelled men and women glorifying Notre Dame, who was described, in the imaginative language of the old Mystery plays, as La Mère du Manoir Céleste.

"The very word restoration," Barrès said, "has come to have a dreadful sound. But there is nothing that need offend anybody. Wisely has it been decided that there shall be no *réplâtrage*. So intense is this feeling of repugnance for mere imitation, copies by the men of today of the work of those who laboured with heart and head and hand in the far-off days, that even when casts exist they will not be used. There is, for example, in the Trocadéro at Paris, a *moulage* of Saint-Nicaise, and the Saint-

Nicaise of Rheims is therefore not altogether lost. But it will not be substituted for the statue which was formerly in the Cathedral. Only the authentic statuary will be admitted. Retouching—or, to employ a strong word, 'faking'—of any kind would be sacrilege in this case: sacrilege whether regarded from the religious or the artistic viewpoint. These groups must be the original groups. The statues which are headless must be left headless, and those which are armless be left without arms. It will, therefore, be seen how important it is that every bit of stone that can be recovered and that can be fitted into its old place should be returned."

How earnestly did Barrès insist in this memorable conversation that no care could be too minute! Nothing should be permitted to falsify the thought of those who built and carved slowly and patiently, not hurrying, not taking heed of time, counting years as moments and centuries as of small account, knowing that they were building and carving an immortal thing that time, as humanity reckons time, could only mellow and enrich. They had not foreseen the destructiveness of shells hurled against this lacelike fretwork, and the ravaging fury of incendiary bombs on the aerial series of springing arches.

The resurrection of Rheims will not be complete, *la pensée de la pierre* will not again impose itself, Barrès added, until there are reunited the elements of so many figures that have been thrown down. At first sight it seemed to be an almost insoluble jig-saw puzzle to place bit by bit together, but happily there is a logic and an order in this company of stone statues.

I record this talk because it illustrates the true preoccupation of Barrès: his desire to place even his hatred of the Germans on an artistic basis. His problem was to reconcile art and patriotism.

He told me something of his beginnings. In the old days of the Quartier Latin he published a little literary review "Les Taches d'Encre." (Blots of Ink) "I also wrote interviews with Renan, and with the philosopher Alfred Fouillée, and with others—but I neglected to go to see them first. It was so much easier to write the interviews than to visit them!"

In those days Jean Moréas, the French poet of Greek origin, with black finger nails, with unwashed neck, pretentious and pompous, Laurent-Tailhade, one of the most gifted but most unfortunate men I have known, Maurice Barrès, and a few others, were inseparable. They represented the movement which was variously known, according to one's appreciation of it, as Symbolism, Decadence, Deliquescence. It was the Fin de

Siècle. Verlaine was drinking himself to death; and trailing from café to café, with a crowd of dissolute followers. When he was not sipping absinthe he was writing wonderful poems.

"Bah!" as Barrès, who was the true genius of the group, would exclaim, "Literature is only a ring on one's finger."

At which the others would protest: "Literature is sacerdotal."

Delicious and yet *risqué* was his "Jardin de Bérénice." Then he quickly plunged into politics—though he approached politics from the psychological side. If he wrote delicate impressions of travel, colorful, rhythmical, and rich, such as "Du Sang, De La Volupté, De la Mort," he also wrote the romance of national energy—"Les Déracinés," "L'Appel au Soldat," "Leurs Figures." He also wrote violent pamphlets. He traced the history of the troubled years of the Third Republic. He painted his personages without indulgence. His satire is terrible —satire of those politicians and generals who found their native element in loathsome waters.

Then, during the war, he returned frankly to journalism, and contributed almost daily articles which were at once scathing and inspiring. Incredible are the scandals which have marked certain *milieux* of France in the pre-war, the war, and the post-war years.

"You ask me what I prefer in my work? There is nothing better than my chronicle of the Great War—those daily pages in which I noted the successive phases of the prodigious drama. I was the witness of mighty events, and my testimony will always be invoked when the moral history of France is being reconstituted. When I left the Chamber I went to a restaurant in the Rue Royale, ate hastily, scribbled my impressions, which were carried off immediately to be printed."

For Barrès the outstanding historical fact was the perpetual march of the population beyond the Rhine towards the softer regions of the West and the South. He did not object to the infiltration of Germanic elements, but he would have them converted by contact with Latin culture. Peace might be perpetuated, he thought, by the intermediary of the Rhineland provinces.

I gathered that Barrès was not especially interested in the work of the younger men. He did not read much—he lived upon the memory of his student days. Yet he contrived to have just views about his contemporaries. He would have been bored to peruse a book from end to end, but a few pages gave him a personal idea of the writer. When he was composing his

academic discourse for the reception of Jean Richepin, his secretary proposed that he should glance at the picturesque "Miarka, la Fille à l'Ourse." "What have we to do with that?" replied Barrès. "Leave her in her caravan." Even when Pierre Loti sent him his volumes with charming dedications, Barrès remarked, "I would love to have the time to read them, but I must reserve that pleasure for my old age."

So Loti's works, like those of many others, were consigned to the "cemetery"—that is to say, a special library where he placed the volumes which were sent to him daily but which he rarely cut and never read. In his study there were only those books which he had long learned to love or which helped him in his immediate work. When he received a book he would see at a glance whether it had any value, and would send a little note, with appropriate compliments, to the author.

There are men who pride themselves on their aristocratic origins and men who pride themselves on their democratic origins. Among the latter is Edouard Herriot, who has been Prime Minister of France, Minister of Beaux-Arts, and Grand Maître de l'Université. He liked it to be known that one of his aunts was a cook in the Barrès family and that when, as a boy, he went to visit his aunt, Barrès would pat him on the head and encourage him—besides seeing that he was given some sugared confection.

Before the war Jérôme Tharaud was the secretary of Barrès. Now that it is the fashion for secretaries to write their reminiscences of those whom they have served, Jérôme naturally thought of relating his years *chez* Barrès. But Jérôme writes always in collaboration with his brother Jean. Therefore they felt obliged to sign their book together.

"My Years with Barrès"—such is the title of the memoirs of the two brothers. While a King or a Prefect, who is a single person, says We—as does an Editor and Charles Lindbergh—the Tharauds, on the contrary, are two men who say I. In the study of Barrès was a chair used by the secretary. The Tharauds have described it. One chair for two? The question is embarrassing. Are the Tharauds two or one? When they write they remark: "In the cabinet of Barrès, where I have passed so many days, I had experiences which few writers have known." That is disconcerting. In France there have been many writers who have pooled their ideas, and often they have been brothers, but so far as I remember none of them, before the Tharauds, ever claimed that what happened to one happened to both. In liter-

ature, at least, they are inseparable—as are the Dolly Sisters in the music-hall.

Recently some of their admirers endeavoured to induce them to pose their candidature for one of the *fauteuils* of the Académie Française, but how was it to be done? It was obvious that the two brothers could not simultaneously enter the Académie, but there is no such writer as Jean Tharaud, and no such writer as Jérôme Tharaud; there is only a combination known as Jérôme and Jean Tharaud constituting a single person.

It was, however, suggested that Jérôme Tharaud might, as the elder of the two brothers, be admitted to represent them both, but the problem was too difficult and eventually the candidature was abandoned. They must run in double harness or not at all.

It is not only in their work that they are united; they live together and are rarely apart. Their friends are friends of both; they depend upon each other completely. If in company one of the brothers relates an anecdote or gives an impression, the other is always brought in to correct the anecdote or to modify the impression. They are constantly in discussion, and it is from their discussions that they strike out the ideas and the opinions which become, as it were, the property of them both. Their collaboration, in short, is not an affair of certain working hours in the day, but is a collaboration of mind and of temperament in all the circumstances of life. Do they indeed live an individual life, or are they spiritually united, as were the Siamese twins physically?

Although a good deal is gained, something is lost by this constant search for the common denominator. Their style is the result of a compromise. The brothers do not let themselves go; they write with exceptional elegance, but they write also with remarkable compression. They are precise and clear, but the lyrical qualities that separately they would have shown are ruthlessly suppressed, for lyrical qualities are, in their essence, personal and cannot be shared.

The secretary—or secretaries—has not betrayed his Master. He—or they—gives an account of the real Barrès, but does not endeavour to reveal him in the worst light. That is something to be thankful for. Here is the Barrès that I knew—ardent and ironic, doctrinaire and sceptic, enthusiastic and weary, ready to devote himself to any cause but always critical, religious but unbelieving, romantic but intellectual. The Tharauds show their independence, but they do not abandon their tact. They

admire, but are not complaisant. Their deference does not exclude frankness.

One of the chief modern preoccupations is to discover how books are written. The public is not content to enjoy the result —it is curious about the how and the why. In the United States, Edgar Allan Poe (the only American writer who has ever really influenced French literature) began this habit of admitting the reader into the confidence of the author. In France, Lamartine sat down, an old man, to recount how he, when a young man, wrote his poetry. Today, the author's own revelations are not sufficient. Everybody wants to enter the workroom. Questions of technique do not merely interest craftsmen. The Tharauds discreetly admit us into the intimacy of Barrès.

He was devoid of curiosity: unlike Anatole France, who loved bibelots and old books, Barrès lived without ornamentation, and only a few pictures of Napoléon and of Condé appealed to him. He never went to the theatre or to concerts or to exhibitions of paintings. In reality he was a solitary figure. He meditated, and threw upon the paper at haphazard, disconnectedly, roughly, his passing thoughts; and then pieced them together, fashioned them, composed a musical accompaniment for them, enveloped them in an atmosphere. "A certain emotion, more spiritual than sensible, and always musical, threw around his clear thoughts a halo of mystery . . ." To be mysterious like the day, to dream in the light like Claude Lorrain, was for him true art, and it is that which is expressed in the title of his last work "Le Mystère en Pleine Lumière."

The first work of the Tharauds, "Dingley, l'Illustre Ecrivain," obtained for them, as long ago as 1906, the Prix Goncourt, and in 1920 they obtained the Grand Prix de Littérature of the Académie Française. They have produced book after book in which the local colour of the places they have visited is brushed in.

Marshal Lyautey, for many years the Resident General of Morocco, deserves the greatest credit for the manner in which he fulfilled his arduous task. He was not content with carrying out his military duties, nor was he content to fulfil administrative duties, he also endeavoured to stimulate interest in Morocco by means of propaganda in France. But propaganda, as it is understood by the average official, excludes the use of art. Now Marshal Lyautey's unique distinction is that in Morocco he encouraged the arts; he invited painters and writers to Morocco.

"If the French who are inclined to be apathetic about their Colonies are ever to take a real interest in their overseas riches," Lyautey said to me in his apartment in the rue Bonaparte, "the élite must lead the way."

The brothers Tharaud were among those who responded to the invitation of Marshal Lyautey, and the result is two especially interesting books—"Marrakech, ou les Seigneurs de l'Atlas," and "Rabat, ou les Heures Marocaines." They have managed to imprison the soul of Morocco between the covers of their books.

But the brothers have travelled all over Europe and in the Near East. They have not been content to sit at home and to depend upon their imagination; they have, like many of the younger Frenchmen, been to see for themselves the colorful countries of Europe and of Asia.

The French cannot be regarded as good voyagers; they are among the most stay-at-home peoples of the Continent; but recently they have been induced to wander afield more than is their wont. Their literature begins to reflect the spirit of travel. Pierre Loti opened to them the doors of the wider world.

The brothers Tharaud certainly do not display the sentimentality of Loti, but they possess an excellent psychological sense, and they bring back with them from their voyages the most interesting notations. They have shown us the Balkans at war; they have taken us on the "Chemin de Damas" (the Road to Damascus); they have penetrated into the Ghettos of Europe, and have painted the peoples in "L'Ombre de la Croix" and "Un Royaume de Dieu"; they have given in "Quand Israël est Roi" a narrative of the Revolution and of Bolshevism in Austria-Hungary.

It would be wrong to describe them as disciples of Barrès but they are to be numbered among the noteworthy writers of present-day France; their works should take a place on the book-shelves not far from those of the brothers Edmond and Jules de Goncourt, the winning of whose prize began their literary career.

Chapter VI

EXPATRIATES AND VISITORS

We expatriates—as it is now the fashion to call American and English writers and artists who live in Paris—are not cut off from home. There drop in upon us many visitors from our own countries; for everybody travels nowadays, and writers and artists have joined the general movement.

I do not know whether we expatriates—is the word meant as a reproach or as a compliment?—envy the visitor more than the visitor envies us. The visitor comes, sees us in our daily haunts, and invariably regrets that he cannot stay: life seems to him so much easier than at home. So indeed it is in many respects. That is why many of us, who are not absolutely compelled by the exigencies of our profession, choose to stay abroad. But we too sigh for the old home country, and when our visitor departs, perhaps with a little sigh of regret, we too experience a momentary heartache. We would like to be going back with him, just as he would like to prolong his holiday from home.

Let me set down a few impressions of representative expatriates and visitors. First among the visitors comes Sherwood Anderson.

Sherwood Anderson is the most English of American writers just as Sinclair Lewis is the most American. I went around the little drawing-rooms of Montparnasse and Passy repeating this phrase. One must amuse oneself somehow. This was a particularly good method of amusement. Everybody was startled. Nearly everybody was shocked. A few brighter folk at once seized on the statement, declared it was the exact truth, wondered why nobody had said it before, and went around coupling my name with that of Anderson.

But it was not meant entirely as a joke. I discussed it with Anderson himself and he agreed that there was a good deal in my contention. When a party came to my studio in his honour, I introduced him as "Sherwood Anderson, the great English writer."

Of course he is anti-English in many of his sentiments, and he will readily talk against England. He describes the American scene—that is to say the Middle Western scene. He endeavours, like every artist with a personality, to strike a new note, and he doubtless thinks this new note is American. It is not. Neither

in manner nor in matter is the prose of Anderson essentially American. It derives straight from English literature. If you take Sinclair Lewis you will see the difference. The two men are poles apart. There is Lewis, trepidant, energetic, keyed up to the mechanism of the age, as bustling as a New York subway. He is writing at the top of his voice. His voice is rather harsh. It is strident. It is staccato. It is forceful—a voice whose chief concern is to make itself heard. Here is Sherwood Anderson, soft-eyed, silent, a dreamer, with a love of horses instead of automobiles, with a love of open spaces instead of subways. His voice is musical, colorful, rich, suave. It does not shrill. It does not particularly desire to make itself heard. It is flexible and enfolding.

I will not insist, if you seriously object, that Anderson is English—though the tradition which he continues is English. Let me put it that he is European. Let me put it that he has a vast background, and that racial memories stir in his blood. Let me put it that his instincts turn towards the past, that they are rebellious of the present and hostile to the future, except in so far as that future contains the body of the past. Anderson knows that civilisation does not move forward any faster because the airplane is faster than the racehorse. He wishes to loiter, to ponder, to escape from the racket, to discover the quiet island somewhere in the sea of himself. That too is America. That too is American. But it is not the America that struggles to stand ahead of the rest of the world. It is not American in the accepted significance of the adjective.

The language of Anderson is poetical; it reaches out after subtle meanings. In it is an undertone and an overtone. The precise shape of the sentence is individual; but, distinctive as all real writers are, there is an obvious affinity between De Quincey, Hazlitt, Pater, Stevenson, Belloc, and Anderson. Without a long line of predecessors it would be difficult to imagine Anderson; whereas there are other American writers whom one can well imagine as the product of spontaneous generation.

Thus we find—or at least I find, for most of the critics have asserted the contrary—that one at least of the great American writers has deep roots in Europe. That is to say, he consciously aims at being an artist. In the current interpretation—which is doubtless false—that is un-American. Much American literature aims at being slick and effective. It's the result that counts. For that matter, most French, English, German literature is of precisely the same kind. Only this slick effective

stuff is not regarded as characteristically European, whereas the Mencken school would have us believe that it is characteristically American.

In A Story-Teller's Story Anderson shows some consciousness of the truth of the apparent paradox. He asks what he is, and he answers:

"I am just a mixture, the cold mortal of the Northwest into whose body has come the warm pagan blood of the South. . . . Behold in me the American man striving to become an artist, to become conscious of himself, filled with wonder concerning himself and others, trying to have a good time and not fake a good time."

Yes, he is an artist in an environment that pretends not to care about art. We sat together in Paris discussing these things, and I hope I went far to persuade him that Americanism, as such, is not an ideal. As ever, the only ideal for the artist is Humanism.

He lived in a little hotel on the Left Bank in Paris. Across it fell the shadow of the Odéon. He could hardly step out of his hotel without ascending the steps that lead to the pillared arcades around the State theatre, and delving into the stores of books that are exhibited along that rectangular promenade. He could hardly set foot out of doors without entering the great gates of the Luxembourg Gardens with its old world terrace, its ancient trees, its Seventeenth Century palace.

Demoded art? An effete civilisation? He did not think so. He was won by these tranquil surroundings which were redolent of history, cultivation, knowledge, and the long legacy of earlier men. They did not drive out of his mind the American scene, but they seemed to connect up in some strange way to the American scene.

"With your European elegance," he told me, "there goes unfortunately a poverty and squalor which we did not know in my little native country village. The Lord knows we were poor! My father was happy-go-lucky. My mother had a desperate job. But I cannot imagine anybody starving in these little American communities. There would always be something to do, always somebody to help one out. But here, among all these evidences of a splendid and ancient civilisation, there is a poverty that is far more killing and hopeless than the almost amusing poverty of my boyhood."

A fine-looking fellow is Anderson, clean-cut though fleshy nose and chin, soft intelligent eyes, broad forehead, and a wealth of rather unkempt hair. He wore, when I knew him, a vivid

green necktie and loose-fitting rather shabby clothes. His wife was uncommonly alert and sympathetic—an admirable companion, as I pictured her, for the artist.

In those days I met a hard-faced American girl not more than twenty years of age. She was well educated, shrewd, alive to all modern movements. She was travelling alone, and happened to be staying in the same cheap little hotel as Anderson.

In my studio she sat rigid, her mask-like face never changing its expression. She placidly smoked her cigarette in a long tube and sipped her brandy.

"I suppose you see something of Sherwood Anderson?" I asked her.

"Oh, he is about the hotel; but I am not interested in Anderson."

I thought of the emotions that girls or boys of my generation, as well instructed as this girl, would have experienced in the presence of a man of Anderson's stamp. We would have been thrilled. She was perfectly indifferent. What really has happened to the younger folk?

Nevertheless I introduced her to Anderson. Afterward, I again asked her for her impressions.

Without "batting an eyelid," she calmly replied: "I was afraid he was going to sit down to talk to me. And I did not want to be bored. But happily I escaped."

What *is* the matter? I told Anderson the story. He laughed. "Yes, they are like that. It has no particular personal application, that behaviour. We would have felt something. The younger folk seem to feel nothing. Now if you or I, sitting by a girl in our youth, had placed an arm around her waist, she would either have responded coyly, or have smacked our face. I believe that today the same girl would not even be aware that an arm was around her waist. She would go on smoking her cigarette and sipping her brandy."

Puzzling, is it not? Is it altogether true? Perhaps one should not generalise.

He had worked as an advertisement writer, and he told me that he found the job easy. He had devised a set of phrases which he kept in his drawer. They applied to various kinds of advertisements. Therefore it cost him no effort to frame a formula, and in the intervals he could write his stories. In the end, however, his trick was discovered. He had repeated a formula too often. The manager "fired" him.

"I suppose I shall have to go back to the game," said Anderson. "I can't make a living out of my books. We are living on

a farm and our wants are few. But 'Winesburg, Ohio' sold only a few thousand copies, and 'A Story-Teller's Story' not many more."

I tried to induce an English publisher to take up his work. Anderson scribbled a note to me: "It's no good. One of my books was, in fact, published in England a few years ago, but it was kept a deadly secret. Nobody knows of it except myself, the publisher, and God."

While the United States is keenly interested in English writers, England is seldom interested in American writers.

In France however there was much interest in Anderson. Victor Llona, a Peruvian who lived in the United States after an education in France, who married an American girl, and who writes both languages well, was enthusiastic about "A Story-Teller's Story." He translated it and it was published with considerable success in Paris.

Afterwards I heard that Anderson had turned country newspaper editor in Virginia and was having great fun in writing editorials both for the Republican and the Democratic organs.

Ezra Pound was frequently in Paris. Unquestionably he is a European although he was born in the United States. He is the complete expatriate. I knew him vaguely in those great days when A. R. Orage was publishing the most original and stimulating review that ever appeared in London—The New Age. As poet and critic he was quickly known to initiates, as was T. S. Eliot, another American expatriate. Always was he breaking out in fresh places. He continues to surprise us. Nobody looks the part of a poet so well as Pound. In his velvet coat, his open shirt with Danton collar, his golden beard, his long hair well brushed up and back from a high forehead, he suited the romantic conception of the poet. Romantic he is, in spite of his Modernism. His chief interest is in the old Provençal poetry which he has imitated with rare distinction.

He is a good talker too. What a vivacious evening we spent for example in an upper room chez Emile! Emile is a picturesque Alsatian restaurant keeper, perpetually dressed in white twill clothes, and a high cook's bonnet. That evening—though it is but one of many—we—that is to say Ford Madox Ford, Pierre Loving, Pound, and myself—gaily played with ideas for hours, in the upper room on the Boulevard Saint-Michel, next to the mock Oriental building of the Bal Bullier. Pound was the merriest spirit of the party.

He was born in Idaho in the 'eighties. After professing Romance Languages, he came abroad. Abroad he has remained

—in London, Paris, Berlin, Rome, Florence, Rapallo, and other places. Ford, who readily catches enthusiasms, once solemnly affirmed to me that Pound is the greatest poet of our day. Certainly he gave great momentum to the Imagist movement not only by writing himself but by assisting younger men.

When a son was born to him he decided to christen him Omar Shakespeare Pound. You will observe the crescendo.

One day he told me that somebody or other was a genius.

"That is a big word," I said. "How do you detect genius?"

To which he slowly and magnificently made this delicious and incomparable reply:

"I have specialised in genius all my life."

I had not suspected that genius was such a common commodity.

Pound could be impressive in unexpected ways. He was introduced to a friend of mine. Their hands clung together for perhaps a thought longer than is usual. Suddenly Pound struck a romantic attitude, and exclaimed: "Don't you feel the electric vibrations?"

Astonished we were when Pound suddenly announced that he had turned musician. He had set to music some of the songs from the Testament of François Villon, one of the earliest and most poignant of French poets. We were bidden to the home of Mrs. Christian Gross in the Avenue Charles Floquet, to hear "Quatre Chansons du Testament, Paroles de Villon, Musique d'Ezra Pound." Again, he hired a hall where selections from this opera by Villon and Pound were given. The performers were Yves Tinayre, Paul Tinayre, Olga Rudge and Robert Maitland. Pound, on the platform, sat at the drums which he beat with a will.

Some of the old long-disused instruments of Southern France were played. The performance was extremely curious. Pound explained to me that he had long been interested in Provençal music as well as in Provençal poetry. Receiving no systematised musical education, he learnt much by consorting with first-class musicians. For two years, from 1910 onwards, he tried with Walter Rummel to discover and piece together specimens of the old troubadour airs, and a number of these songs were published. Twelfth century music was thought by moderns, accustomed to the piano and other instruments, not to have enough "body," but Ezra Pound, appreciative of its special qualities, collected at least two hundred melodies, and learnt how to present them, without unnecessary transposition, to the modern taste. When Provençal poetry went over into Italy

it became too complicated. The words lost something of their simplicity. Since the Provençal language is difficult to understand, Ezra Pound found that he might substitute Chaucerian stanzas in certain cases and obtain similar effects. The duration of the notes is not indicated in the ancient music and wide scope is left for individual interpretation. It was Pound's task to give, in collaboration with others, a definite shape to this music, to record the time and to make old melodies polyphonous. For fifteen years he laboured almost unknown in this field.

Poetry, he explained to me, may be regarded as half way between music and prose. So the transition from poetry to music was not unnatural and he has grown more and more devoted to music.

It was this interest in music that caused him to "launch" George Antheil. George Antheil wrote a Ballet Mécanique. There was to be an orchestra of pianos not played by hand but by machinery. Sixteen pianolas connected and synchronised, their sound magnified by loud speakers and a large buzzing electric fan adding to the uproar, were promised us if we would attend the Théâtre des Champs-Elysées. The torrent of sound was to be unimaginable.

Before this extraordinary concert Pound explained to me his idea of the new rôle of music in the modern world.

"It is possible to imagine music being taken out of the chamber, and entering social and industrial life so completely and so splendidly that the whole clamour of a great factory will be rythmically regulated; and the workers will work, not to a deafening din, but to a superb symphony. The factory manager will be a musical conductor on an immense scale, and each artisan will be an instrumentalist. This is not a foolish dream; such industrialists as Henry Ford have already begun to put, vaguely and dimly, my conception into practice. After all it is only an extension of the methods of the sailors and of all primitive workers who instinctively harmonise their efforts."

"A thousand men would be creating, not merely material things, but in the process of creation would be producing music. I say music, not a cacophony of confused noises, but a gigantic symphony played in accordance with the score of an all-controlling chef d'orchestre. An entire town may become the stage from which will rise the regulated harmony of life. Factory chimneys will be organ-pipes, each workshop a piano-key, each Nasmyth hammer a drum-stick, each loom a violin, each engine a trombone . . ."

Antheil, whom Pound "took up," laid great stress on the

measuring out of sounds. Composers have always been rather vague about time. Antheil insists on the most precise division of the spaces. It is not a matter of playing faster or slower—but a matter of absolute precision in the duration of notes and spaces.

I quote Pound's exposition of these theories:

"Antheil is the first artist to use machines, I mean actual modern machines, without bathos.

"Machines are musical. They are not literary or poetic. I doubt if they are pictorial or sculptural: they have form, but their distinction is not in form, it is in their movement and energy.

"The lesson of machines is precision, valuable to the plastic artist and to literati.

"Words are superfluous for certain things and inadequate for others; a painter about to paint a sunset needs to know more about it than an author who describes it.

"You can imitate the sound of machinery verbally, you can make new words, you can write:

pan-pam vlum vlum vlan-ban, etc.,

there are also mimetic words like bow-wow and *mao, miaou,* in Greek, Chinese, Egyptian and other tongues, imitating the noises of animals; but these are insufficient equipment for the man of letters.

"Music is the art most fit to express the fine quality of machines. Machines are now a part of life; it is proper that men should feel something about them; there would be something weak about art if it couldn't deal with this new content.

"Machines acting in time-space, and hardly existing save when in action, belong chiefly to an art acting in time-space. Antheil has used them, effectively. That is a *fait accompli* and the academicians can worry over it if they like."

Piano-lovers will writhe at Pound's jibe at the instrument which used, before the coming of the gramophone and the radio, to be in every self-respecting home:

"I long for the day when the piano shall be as the hansom-cab, which vehicle it resembles, and when the pianist shall be as the cab-driver, so far as the concert hall is concerned. The instrument will abide with us yet, for there is the pianola attachment, and if, for some time, it is necessary to train acrobats to play Bach-Busoni for pianola records, surely human invention will discover the means of making the records direct . . .

"All keyboard instruments tend to make performers of

people not born to be musicians; and the very fact that one can play a keyboard instrument quite correctly without in the least knowing whether a given note is in tune or is correct in itself, tends to obscure the value of true pitch. This perception, the first requisite of any player upon strings, is therefore left unconsidered by the piano student. The piano tuner is responsible for that. His services are inexpensive . . .

"The present instrument is a sort of cheap substitute for the orchestra, the only instrument with enough variety and range to give a sort of shorthand account of music too complicated for a fiddle or 'cello or cornet. But to play a piano *with* an orchestra is anathema. Why use a substitute when the richer medium is at hand? If a mania for pianos swept over Europe during an unfortunate period, can we not forgive, or at any rate forget, and let the piano concerto go to the proper scrap-heap of experiment, meritorious in its day but no longer fit for conversation?"

That is how Pound talks—always with fine exaggeration, irresistible verve, overwhelming gusto.

Whatever may be thought of these theories it was great fun to hear the Mechanical Ballet. The monotony of the interminable composition which was unreeled on its perforated roll was relieved by the blasts of air that were blown by a big electric fan. People turned up their coat collars, put on their hats, opened their umbrellas, yelled and hooted against the buzzers. Ezra Pound, in a flowing blue shirt, stood up and raised his voice above the hubbub. One could distinguish such words as "Idiot! Imbecile! Ignoramus! Philistine!" But there were louder roars of laughter.

Brancusi, the black-and-white bearded sculptor, who is also in the vanguard of art, grew excited; William and Louise Bullitt, then living in Elinor Glyn's much-mirrored Paris house, championed the young musician: I had heard at their place, a little time before, more orthodox pieces by Antheil, and had seen Walter Damrosch congratulate the American composer. Looking round the beautiful theatre, I distinguished scores of familiar faces, but they were distorted in violent approval or disapproval. Everybody was shouting at everybody else—and at Antheil! Undisturbed, the tiny figure on the platform restarted the perforated roll, and pedalled harder than before.

A diminutive figure—a boyish face. And indeed Antheil was only somewhere in the middle twenties. He was as playful as a kitten. Thus I came upon him the next day climbing like a monkey along the walls of the house in which he lived. He

caught a swinging sign and swung with it. Like Harold Lloyd in the pictures, he found at last a footing on the window-sill of a high story.

"What on earth are you doing?" I shouted to him.

"I've forgotten my latch-key," he called down, "so I'm getting in by the window."

He was born in New Jersey of Polish parents. As a child he was taught to play the violin and the piano. At the age of eleven he had a considerable knowledge of harmony. He was the pupil of Constantine Von Sternberg who had studied with Liszt and had been a friend of Wagner. Then he took up composition with Ernest Bloch. Berlin recognised him as a virtuoso. When I last saw him he told me he was writing an opera which would sum up mechanical civilisation in America.

Pound came to see me after the concert, and when I offered him a drink he replied: "I would prefer a pectoral pastille, if you please—my voice is hoarse."

Naturally he edited and printed a magazine. He called it *Exile*. In the announcement which he sent to me he said:

> *Exile* will appear three times per annum until I get bored with producing it. It will contain matter of interest to me personally, and is unlikely to appeal to any save those disgusted with the present state of letters in England, and ironically amused by a standard of criticism designed chiefly to protect vested interest in electroplates.

It was edited somewhere about Rapallo. He asked me to contribute to it. I offered him, as was the custom in Paris, a fragment of "work in progress." All these Continental magazines contained writings with the generic title of "Work in Progress." He declined it, and accepted it, and declined it again, and appeared to accept it—all in the same letter. This particular letter is so characteristic of Pound that I cannot refrain from quoting part of it:

> *No,* anything but that. *Not* a fragment of a novel.
> *Primis:* "Space" (a quantity you have before heard of from edtrs.) but in this case really exiguous.
> *Secundiis;* I have already declared against fragments of novels. Even to our highly distinguished if, perhaps for the nonce, rather unintelligible friend James Joyce.
> *Tertiis:* On principle, that I don't believe in printing frgs. of rns.; and that it wuz only done in the "transat." because F.M.F. (Ford) was absoLOOTly up a tree and cdnt. get decent stuff enough to fill his space except from nuvvelists who wdnt. write anything else.
> *Quat.* Against intention, I have already a serial, or wd. have had if I weren't lamming most of it into No. 1. with intention of finishing it off in No. 2.

And even Quinquiis (if the form exists) : I have my rapportage, for the 2nd. number. AND it is 15 pages longer than the rapportage ought to be, BUT one can't expect authors to aim at a given hole.

By which I mean, that 'sposin' we lied, or you hadn't told me it was part of a novel, but a "slice of life," or report of contemporary moeurs . . . it prob. wdnt. fit into No. 2.

All of which is a HELL of a way to thank you for being ready to send it on. I ought prealablement to have explained more fully what I am at: i.e., a gatherink up for the fragments that wdnt. otherwise get into print, or that the authors wdn., in view of that imposs—or improba-bility, bother to put on paper.

Hope this'll be clearer in a few days—when you see the first issue (which le sieur Titus is instructed to send you). I mean that le Sieur Hickok, for instance, wdnt. have written just that for the Brooklyn Eagle, or Mr Mencken have thrust "Adolphe" on his readers. Or anyone printed my verse. (for different, in each case, reasons)

The third number wd. be too late for you (?) at least I imagine your novel will be itself in press by then. I mean supposing me to suppose that the mss. is not from a novel, but rapportage, which it *mayn't* in the least be.

No, c'est ridicule. I have told Joyce I was not using bits of novels. And I'd better stick to it. The little magazine can't possibly hold chunks of novels by all the lordly company of the novelists of exalted station. Not in its present size; and any decent (veux pas dire pudique) novel of normal dimensions will have a wider distribution ANYhow.

BUT I shd. like to see the fragment. That however, I probably shan't, after what I have written, until it appears under covers and with its context.

Assai parlato. The orig. idea, or one of 'em re novels; being that 'tis foolish to print in mag. circulating a few hundred, stuff that as novel is bound to reach at least a few thou.; only point wd. be in introducing unknown author, and forcing him on poss. publisher.

ETC.

About the damn review. I want you in it somewhere and somehow.

After that chunk of erratic staccato Ezra, it is difficult to revert to normal prose. The American writers in Paris were not, however—fortunately or unfortunately—all like Pound. There was Louis Bromfield, the exact opposite of Pound; careful, thoughtful, conscientious, an admirable craftsman, the winner of the Pulitzer Prize. He lived far from the commotion of Montparnasse in placid Passy. We had dinner together and I found him an exceedingly pleasant amiable young man. "I don't understand," he said, explaining his own position as an expatriate, "those Americans who consider Paris to be only a playground. It is an ideal spot in which to work. I love New York, but I could not work there—there's too much going on. It is stimulating, but Paris is better for writing."

Bromfield was in the American Volunteer Ambulance Service attached to the French Army and he received the Croix de Guerre for bravery.

In the same quarter lived Julien Green to whom Llona introduced me. I scarcely know whether to class him as an American or a Frenchman. His parents were American, but he was, I believe, born in France. Certainly he writes in French extremely well, and his Adrienne Mesurat was hailed as a French masterpiece. Before it could appear in America and in England —where it won the Bookman Prize—it had to be translated. He will certainly make his mark. When I met him I thought of the older generation of Americans who had chosen to write in French—particularly of the two poets, Francis Viellé-Griffin and Stuart Merrill, who brought a breath of the freedom of the new world to the classic French metres.

Then there was Ernest Walsh who, with Ethel Moorhead, founded an interesting magazine *This Quarter*. He had brought to me his earliest poems for my opinion. He was then in quest of encouragement. Although I could not suggest any conventional market for them, I did not fail to recognise the vitality which was apparent under an archaic disguise. Alas! he was to die of consumption before he had developed his full powers. Ethel Moorhead deserves the highest commendation for her devoted care of him and of his memory.

There was Robert MacAlmon who tried his hand at publishing as well as writing. Some of the volumes issued in Paris by the Contact Press were decidedly original, though they would have aroused the ire of Postal authorities and Puritan societies. His own production was rather formless, but was strong because it was natural. One could meet him in the cafés of the quarter only when he was not working. When he was working he was "invisible"—as the French say. He married a daughter of an English shipping magnate, and I will never forget the indignation with which he told me of the American newspapers that had featured this marriage. "Starving Greenwich Village Poet Weds English Heiress"—that was how the headlines ran. In consequence somebody invented a perfectly unfair nickname—Bob MacAlimony. "I was not starving or penniless," he protested. "I was a prose-writer rather than a poet, and my wife cannot be described as an heiress. Otherwise the report was fairly correct."

This statement was made at the dinner table after a lady, who was sitting a few chairs away, had turned on him and

said sweetly: "Were you not mentioned a few years ago in the headlines?"

I consoled him by repeating my own conversation with the same lady. She had opened fire by asking me brightly, "Tell me, what have you done?"

"I am afraid, Madame," I replied, "that I have done nothing in particular."

"Oh, no," she returned, "I am sure you have. Do tell me."

"Really, I cannot think of anything at the moment which would interest you. It is so hard to compose an impromptu Who's Who."

"Ah, now you admit you have done something. Do be frank about it."

"I have nothing to confess, Madame. I am not even like the character of Chekov who dolefully admitted that he had abandoned six women and nine had abandoned him."

"How terribly disappointing!" was the final comment of my inquisitive and tactless neighbour.

MacAlmon then told me a story of the negro hotel-servant who prided himself on his tact. "I will show you the difference between politeness and tact. Today I entered what I thought was an empty bathroom. A lady was in the bath. So I went out and as I closed the door I said 'I beg your pardon.' That was politeness. But I added 'I was not aware you were here, Sir.' That Sir was tact."

A quality which gushing ladies moving in literary circles might well cultivate.

Chapter VII

LECTURES AND DEBATES

It is the fashion in Europe to be mildly amused at the American love of lectures. Lecturers, whether French or English, have brought back tales of the avidity with which Women's Clubs, Universities, and Literary Guilds, imbibe the milk of the spoken word. I know men who make a capital living by taking a short annual trip to the United States; and one American novelist informed me that he would be unable to earn enough were it not for his two months' tour every year of the Clubs. Personally I think this is excellent. Knowledge can be better conveyed viva voce than by books; and the curiosity about authors is healthy.

But it is not my purpose to descant on the American habit of listening to lectures. My Paris experience has taught me that the French, unquestionably intellectual, are no less keen about lectures than Americans. They are keener still about debates. Hence the success of Léo Poldès and his Club du Faubourg.

If Léo Poldès had lived in another age he would have been a great Revolutionary leader. As we live in a Republic he is content to conduct the Club du Faubourg—a title which indeed recalls Revolutionary days—and to organise three times a week great popular debates on every conceivable subject.

The most important persons in Paris do not disdain to appear at the popular forum over which Poldès presides. A tall, clean-limbed man, he dominates the crowd. His smooth-shaven face is like a mask, impassive, slightly yellow, through which peer observant eyes. He sits on the platform ready to intervene as soon as the slightest disturbance begins. Then he loudly rings an immense bell, drowning the voices of the malcontents.

I scarcely know how he exercises his authority over his passionate audiences. Those audiences are composed of every class, from the lowest to the highest—for the lowest classes (so-called) in France are interested in discussion and in whatever purports to be intellectual, while the highest classes are not unwilling to engage in the rough-and-tumble of public meetings. An incredible variety of topics is presented to the assembly, and though an appalling lot of nonsense is talked much

sound sense too is heard, and the clash of opinions is vivacious and entertaining.

"How did you come to organise this Club?" I once asked Léo Poldès.

"It was an inevitable thing to do," he replied. "The Parisian by nature is curious and athirst for knowledge. He loves to have views on no matter what subject. He is never so happy as when he is expressing those views. He becomes excited about every question. He is content if he can get together with his fellows, and pit argument against argument. Julius Caesar accused the Gauls of verbosity, and though I am not going to subscribe to that verdict, it is certain that the Frenchman—and particularly the Parisian—is glad to expatiate. I provide him with the opportunity. It is so simple. There is a good deal of work to do in arranging the meetings, because it is necessary to choose from the hundreds of prominent persons who are anxious to thrust their services on me. But otherwise these debates arrange themselves. My real task is to keep order."

When I first attended the Club du Faubourg—then held on Saturday afternoons in a large but obscure theatre in the dingy rue Montmartre in the midst of the Paris newspaper offices and printing works, I was forcibly reminded of the Revolutionary Clubs. It was, I imagine, precisely in this manner that the citizens met in the later years of the Eighteenth Century to discuss their affairs. In this Twentieth Century I thought of the perturbations in the Café Foy, situated in the Palais-Royal, when one of the orators, Camille Desmoulins, leapt on a table and cried in a terrible voice, "To arms, citizens, to arms!"—and the Bastille was taken. I thought of the Club of the Jacobins, and of other clubs which played their part in arousing popular feeling, and in giving an outlet to popular feeling, throughout the wonderful days when talking and doing went hand in hand.

Yes, the Parisians are great talkers, and the Revolution could hardly fail precisely because it unloosened tongues. Verbalism is at once the vice and the virtue of the French. All the typical French characters are fond of words. Rabelais and Montaigne could hardly belong to any other country. Panurge is a perfect picture of the lively Parisian. D'Artagnan may be largely an invention of Dumas, but his Gascon eloquence, joined to Gascon bravery, is real. Cyrano de Bergerac was partly made by nature and partly by Edmond Rostand, but again his oratorical powers are essentially French. Even the bourgeois eloquence of Joseph Prudhomme—"This presentation sword is the proudest day of

my life"—is racy of the land. When Daudet created Tartarin he attributed to him universal quality of the French. Humorous or serious, personal or impersonal, the Frenchman has what is vulgarly called the gift of the gab. He must be allowed to harangue his fellows or he will explode.

As Léo Poldès says, it is simple enough to induce Parisians to come together, and to exchange their opinions, but, as the French say, simple as it is it was necessary to think of it. Léo Poldès thought of it, and though foreigners may scarcely have heard his name I assure you that he is one of the most important men in Paris.

He has provided for Parisians an entertainment that pleases them more than the theatre or the cinema. They will always rush during Lent to Notre-Dame or the Madeleine when a famous preacher—Père Samson, Père Janvier, Père Sertillanges—is announced. Occasionally, a philosopher such as Henri Bergson, will draw all Paris to the Collège de France to listen to the most abstruse dissertations. Parisians will struggle to enter a hall where politicians are to hold forth—especially if two politicians are to engage in controversy. But when they can themselves participate in the debates they are delighted beyond measure. If I were asked to state who has done most for the entertainment of Parisians in recent years, I should unhesitatingly reply—Léo Poldès!

It sounds like a contradiction in terms, but it is nevertheless true that the meetings of the Club du Faubourg, whether in the Salle Wagram at Ternes, or in the Palais des Sociétés Savantes in the Latin Quarter, or at Montmartre, or at Les Halles, are always marked both by passion and by good humour. When the crowd becomes excited there is no need to be alarmed. A timely jest and they will laugh uproariously at themselves. The stranger might think a riot inevitable, but calm is restored as if by magic. It is all great fun.

Nor must it be supposed that the women are absent. There was, for example, a stout market woman who particularly pleased me when she arose—as she frequently did. She would set her arms akimbo, and roar out her criticism. In a raucous voice, badly weather-beaten, she would denounce the politicians of the day, or would fulminate against an author who had emitted some displeasing theory. Head thrown back, mouth opened in a gigantic square, bosom heaving, hands on quivering haunches, she resembled one of the female furies who forced the King back from Versailles to his virtual imprisonment in the Palais des Tuileries. But when her denunciation was becom-

ing tragic, her native wit flashed out. She would say something funny that made the audience rock with laughter. I never knew her name, but she was great.

And then, by way of contrast, a tiny *femme de lettres*—for there are women of letters as well as *hommes de lettres* in Paris—would spring up, her nervous little frame vibrating, her shrill voice stabbing the air. She was an obscure poetess of uncertain—or rather all too certain—age, with violent views on the rights of women. The chief rights of women, in spite of their intellectuality, are, it would appear, amorous.

She seized me once and began, "We intellectuals——"

"Pardon," I interrupted, "I cannot claim such a distinction. I am only an artisan."

She glared at me, but continued: "We intellectuals, men or women, have the same need of love. Why are women denied the right to love? I claim that right for myself, and I will defend my sisters, less fortunate than myself, to the last gasp."

"But it seems to me, Madame, that particularly in Paris women are only too much pursued by men."

"Ah, it is just that against which I protest. We are regarded as passive creatures. But I would that we were active, that we chose for ourselves as freely as men, and were honoured instead of mocked at for our ardour."

She presented me with a copy of her verses in which there was certainly no restraint.

Then there was the Roi des Camelots, as he called himself. He was an extraordinary figure—the most voluble man I have met. By profession he was a street vendor. Whenever a road is being repaired, or a house is being demolished, a camelot will take up his stand at a convenient corner and will sell his wares with a wealth of patter. Some of the most enjoyable hours I have passed in Paris have been spent in listening to these glib salesmen. They beat the cheapjacks of the market places in Anglo-Saxon countries, and their dissertations are often more comic than those of Artemus Ward. They may, for example, deal in some blood-purifying mixture, but before they produce their mixture they will talk on every topic under the sun. Usually perched on a high rostrum, under a gigantic umbrella, they will discuss philosophy, religion, politics; and they are particularly strong on such social problems as concern the relations of the sexes.

The Roi des Camelots—not to be confounded with the Camelots du Roi who are the propagandists of the Monarchist idea in France—was, as his title indicates, the King of them all.

He could keep any crowd enthralled for an hour with his blend of pseudo-wit and mock-wisdom. Moreover he had a special foible. He proclaimed himself a Spiritualist, and would relate hair-raising stories of apparitions. It appeared that because he had, after long study of occult works and experiments such as no one had ever dared to make, plucked the heart out of the mystery of human existence and had demonstrated human survival after death, he was persecuted by evil spirits, and for proof he would point to a boil on his neck which had grown instantly when he was touched by the clammy finger of Satan himself who had entered by the locked door of his apartment. It did not matter what question was being considered by the Club, at some moment the Roi des Camelots was sure to jump up—gaunt, frock-coated, red-vested, and begin his contribution, which somehow turned to the misdeeds of the evil spirits who were pursuing him for his superior knowledge.

Paul Heuzé was a sceptic who revealed the tricks of the mediums and of the fakirs who for some time made Paris their happy hunting-ground. It is not to be charged against the French that they are particularly credulous: they are only ready to examine any claim that is put forward. At the grave Sorbonne itself mediums such as Eva were submitted to tests, and learned professors solemnly reported on the phenomena.

The famous physicist, Charles Richet, like many equally distinguished predecessors, espoused the cause of Spiritualism.

Dicksonn was always ready to speak against the mediums and to expose their methods. As a conjurer he would repeat the familiar phenomena of flowers thrown by invisible hands, accordeons played in empty cabinets, ghostly emanations, and so forth. His lectures were always well attended.

The most comic incident of all which was exploited in the gatherings of the Faubourg related to ectoplasm. Ectoplasm is the name given to a white wax-like substance which suddenly appears in darkened rooms. It is, according to the Spiritualists, produced by spirits. But alas! one medium was rudely snatched from his chair at the moment when the ectoplasmic substances were manifesting themselves, and a flattened piece of real wax, with the plain imprint of the lower part of his body, was discovered on the chair.

About these matters, the Club grew very excited. There were men and women who were hot assailants of mediums, and others who were just as hot in their defence. Among the latter was the Roi des Camelots.

Then, closely allied to the spiritualistic period, there was a

fakir period. The fakirs came to Paris in swarms. They pretended that they were Egyptian or Indian. They stuck knives in their cheeks and in their throats—in carefully selected parts. They permitted themselves to be buried alive—though with plenty of air around them. They lay on beds covered with sharp nails—all of which were slightly sloped backwards. Heuzé revealed these tricks too. But the Faubourg debated for and against fakirism night after night.

Doctor Jaworski was a favourite of the Faubourg. I believe he is a specialist of distinction who is to be taken seriously in his profession. But in a series of books he has developed a strange theory regarding the life of the world. So far as I can follow it—though it must be understood that I do not pretend to expound it in a few sentences—the world is a sentient being, which is passing through exactly the same stages as mankind. The pre-human world has epochs which correspond to the different aspects of the embryon, and between embryology and geology is a precise analogy which he has carefully worked out. The historical world corresponds in the same manner to the career of a man. The early ages of the world are the ages of childhood. If I remember aright the Roman age represents about the tenth year, and the world is now—to use equivalences—about thirty years old. These are not vague statements. He sets out to show in pseudo-scientific manner that every trait of a boy of ten is parallelled by the traits of the Romans. There is, indeed, a settled equivalence—so many hundred of years being equivalent to a year of human life. Whatever one may think of this doctrine, Dr. Jaworski, in his appearances at the Faubourg, was always interesting.

Again there was Georges Pioch—round body, full-moon face. Personally I have a genuine admiration for George Pioch, who is warm-hearted and truly eloquent. We used often to meet in a literary circle which had its headquarters in a Boulevard café. He writes well though affectedly, and has known almost everybody of his time—a friend of Claude Debussy, Pierre Loti, Anatole France, Romain-Rolland, Wagner.

Whenever there was a political murder in Paris—and they were frequent—Georges Pioch would advance somewhere behind his stomach to the witness-bar and would address the jury on behalf of the accused. Though he deprecated assassination he could always find excuses for it. He might have no personal knowledge of the victim or of the assassin, and, of course, never by any chance could speak to the facts. But such testimony as he offered is allowed in the Paris courts. He would

plead that the real victim was the prisoner, who had been moved by wrongs done to him or to his class or to his country. Generally the murderer was acquitted.

In addition Pioch furnished chronicles to the advanced newspapers. At one time he was a Communist, but when the communists became suspicious of "intellectuals," and believed that anyone whose hands were not horny must be a traitor, Pioch was ejected from the party. Nevertheless he continued to hold forth on any hospitable platform, and the platform of Léo Poldès was to him hospitable.

As I say, I found him sympathetic and surely sincere. Yet I cannot refrain from quoting Jean-Jacques Brousson, with whom he fell foul when the former secretary of Anatole France wrote his memoirs of the Master who had been the idol of Communists and Socialists. It was a comic quarrel. Brousson showed that France, though he concealed his detestation, had a horror of the illiterate workers who sent deputations to him. Pioch attacked Brousson as a liar, as a spy, as a calumniator, as a snail on a statue.

To which Brousson replied that a snail could not damage a statue, and a better image would be a snail on the laurel wreath. Then he became personal. He called Pioch the Tartarin of Anarchy. Alluding to the fatness of Pioch, he described him (in the days when the country was suffering from fiduciary inflation) as the worst form of inflation. Pioch was "a Dutch cheese perched on two match stalks." He was the Revolutionary in Slippers. Declamatory and evangelical in public, he led a double life. At home, he lived in his own sumptuous hôtel, in a rich quarter with—crime of crimes!—several domestics. Pioch was the real "martyr of obesity," celebrated by Henri Béraud. I do not endorse these humorous diatribes—I merely cite them as an example of the literary manners in Paris which the Faubourg encouraged.

Nobody who has failed to frequent the Club du Faubourg truly knows Paris life. It is the most illuminating cross-section of Paris that exists. Why do foreigners always neglect these manifestations, which are at once popular and distinguished, and which reveal clearly the wonderful intellectual vitality of France? I propose to recall at random some of the subjects which were debated. There comes to my mind the demonstration in favour of Dieudonné. Dieudonné was associated with the notorious Bonnot gang of anarchists, who discovered, not long before the war, that the automobile may be used to terrorise the bourgeois. With a thin veneer of philosophy and

of political purpose, they vowed the destruction of society and robbed and killed as they went. For a long time they were able to resist the police, but finally, after a siege in due form, they were taken. They were tried and executed or sent overseas to the penal settlements.

Many people believed in the innocence of Dieudonné, who had not participated in the exploits of the gang, and had merely known them as philosophical anarchists. After the war Dieudonné succeeded in escaping from the penal settlement in Guiana and took refuge in Brazil. There was a strong movement in favour of a free pardon and eventually it was granted by the Government. Dieudonné returned to his native land where he was greeted by his wife and children, and by the journalists. He became the hero of the hour. It was not enough to repair a wrong—if wrong had been done: it was thought necessary to place Dieudonné on a pedestal. That is the French way.

Of course Dieudonné had to speak at the Club du Faubourg on the terrible penal settlements which France is one of the last countries to maintain in fever-ridden countries. Albert Londres, a clever journalist, wrote a powerful indictment of these colonies in a book entitled "Au Bagne." He was the chief instrument in obtaining the Presidential grace for Dieudonné.

So Dieudonné was rapturously greeted at the Faubourg. There were Senators and other public men on the platform. Léo Poldès placed his valuable gold watch on the desk. There was the usual enthusiastic oratory. Léo Poldès then went to take up his watch. Horror! It had disappeared. Who was the culprit? Uneasy glances were cast at Dieudonné. After all . . . But to have denounced the theft would have ruined the meeting. What was to be done? For once Léo Poldès was nonplussed. Presently the Senator placed his hand in his pocket, and, to his surprise, pulled out a gold watch that did not belong to him! Léo Poldès breathed again. The Senator, confused, amid noisy laughter, restored the watch which he had, in the heat of his eloquence, unwittingly snatched up.

Authors were prominent in the meetings. Thus Stephen Artault was given the platform to explain why he wrote "L'Amour, Ecole du Bonheur"—Love as a School of Happiness. When he had explained, Francis Carco was "put upon trial." The Club likes to put people upon trial. A letter is addressed to the culprit summoning him to appear to answer the charge. If he remains absent, he still has an excellent advertisement; but if he comes in person there is more fun. Francis

Carco, who has specialized in descriptions of the low haunts of Paris, was on this occasion indicted for having written a book on Venal Love. At the same time Jean Prévost, an interesting young man whom Adrienne Monnier brought to my house, was likewise put upon trial because he had written on the same subject.

On another day Léon Frapié, who has made a study of primary schools, and has given us many pregnant little works on the educational system in the form of fiction, was "tried." A police court case attracting attention at the moment gave an opportunity for observations on maternity. In the program, which I have before me, the following questions are posed: "Do not a hundred thousand children die each year because of unsuitable material conditions? Should therefore the woman not be free to dispose as she pleases of her body? Should one tolerate, approve, or condemn the neo-Malthusians? Do we need few or many infants? Should maternity be deliberate?"

It will be readily appreciated how these problems, freely and publicly debated, excite the interest of the Faubourg crowds. Often frankness goes beyond all limits of good taste. For this debate convocations were sent to Professor Pinard, a celebrated gynecologist—who happened also to be the doyen of the Chamber of Deputies—and to the well-known woman doctor Madame Pelletier.

There were, besides, Victor Margueritte, the somewhat notorious novelist, author of "La Garçonne," who had written a romance "Ton Corps est à Toi" (Your Body Belongs To You) which seemed to defend the pratice of abortion. Finally, there was the famous Lépine, the most popular Prefect of Police, though sternly repressive—now an old man but with his eagle eye as bright as in the old days, and his sharp-pointed white beard lifted for battle. I do not think that in any other country could there be organised such public debates on these delicate topics.

Another day international politics had the honours. Does Germany want war or peace? Is a Franco-German reconciliation possible? Does a dark cloud still loom over Europe? Among those convoked was Auguste Abel, a German politician, Paul-Boncour, Loucheur, Klotz, Renaudel—French politicians of some prominence—Armand Charpentier who during the war was a censor, and afterwards tried to prove the war guiltiness of his own country—Pierre Taittinger, the leader of the French Fascists . . .

It is almost needless to add that these personages, though

advertised and thrown into the debates, do not always turn up at the meetings. Léo Poldès does not promise that they will be there—he merely states that he has written to them inviting them to attend. Yet in a surprising number of cases they either appear or send lengthy communications, for they recognise that the Club du Faubourg is not to be despised. Thus when the Club was asked to decide by popular vote whether Anatole France should have been "shown up" by those who were admitted into his intimacy, men like Michel Corday, the novelist, Joseph Caillaux, the politician, Sylvain, the doyen of the Comédie Française who went on the same boat with France to Buenos-Ayres, Paul Souday, the critic of the Temps who had published a violent article against the practice of coining money out of indiscretions, and a dozen other celebrities who had been associated with Anatole France were invited, and at least half of them accepted the invitation.

Another subject that Léo Poldès, with unerring judgment, picked out was that of rejuvenation. Dr. Voronoff had discovered a method of grafting monkey glands on human beings, which, it is claimed, arrests the processes of age. Is such a method permissible? Is it effective? Can we preserve our faculties for an unlimited number of years? How keenly the crowd took up this theme!

Then Marcel Prévost, of the Académie Française, an authority on the modern woman, began a debate, and the ex-Minister Piétri expounded the financial situation, and Emile Mas, a dramatic critic specially attached to the Comédie-Française, raised the perennial question of whether the subsidised theatre, in which arise perpetual quarrels, is well managed, and Ernest Judet, an editor who had been acquitted of treason, opened the ball against the Vatican which had placed the Action Française, the Royalist newspaper, together with the books of Charles Maurras and Léon Daudet, on the Index.

Whatever one may think of the advisability of stirring up public opinion on these matters, one cannot but admire the fine flair of Léo Poldès. Matters just as calculated to arouse popular prejudices on one side or the other he somehow contrives to find three times a week, and there pass in rapid succession at the Tribune most of the men and women who figure in the public eye. No wonder that the Club du Faubourg is successful, and that its periodical banquets are as lively as its debates.

Less successful, for purely material reasons, but no less in-

teresting, were the evenings organised by Alexandre Mercereau. In a modest way I helped to "subsidise" them. They were held in a small café on the Boulevard du Montparnasse, which afterwards became a strange nocturnal resort—The Jockey—and later in a similar café on the Boulevard Raspail. Mercereau was more concerned with the picturesque aspects of Parisian life—the apache, the literary circles, the vanishing quarters, the notabilities of the last generation. Himself a poet, a musician, an art critic, a publisher's reader, he arranged lectures on poetry and art, interspersed with musical recitals. I confess that in his University—as he ambitiously called it—I learnt much of the Paris that is disappearing.

He had a genius for finding a former friend of Verlaine who would relate his reminiscences of "poor Lélian"; or a frequenter of the old Chat Noir who would tell us about the strange red-haired cabaret keeper, Rodolphe Salis, to whose establishment painters and poets and the public of the 'Nineties flocked; or a writer who had been cradled on the Butte Montmartre—in the queer village now sadly changed; or a genuine product of the working-class district of Belleville who, by his talent as a poet, had penetrated to the drawing-rooms of duchesses.

There would be, one evening, a traveller who had spent some years in Cambodia, and his lecture would be illustrated by dances of young Cambodians. There would be, next evening, a companion of Modigliani, who would recount the tragic end of that legendary painter. Then there would be someone to celebrate the verses of Paul Fort, and to talk generally of literary cafés.

There I have greeted Maurice Rostand, his golden hair aflame, a dramatist who is following in the footsteps of his illustrious father Edmond Rostand; and Madame Aurel, whose salon is always open to young men of talent; and Dr. Pierre Vachet the exponent of mental healing.

Innumerable are the anecdotes that I have there heard. Occasionally an evening would be devoted to the old chansons of the different provinces of France. Or an attempt would be made to revive the Chinese shadows which were brought to perfection by Caran d'Ache. One evening would be given up to the poetry of Czecho-Slovakia, and another to negro sculpture. "Spirituals" would be sung. Every country was treated in turn. To round off this comprehensive program thought-reading and other occult subjects would be dealt with by competent persons.

Such variety, such entertainment, such out-of-the-way in-

struction has rarely been provided. I marvelled at the versatility of Mercereau, and regretted that he could not find a more suitable meeting-place. We were squeezed together like the proverbial sardines, and when Léon Bernard came from the Comédie-Française expressly to recite a page of Blasco Ibanez, or a poem of Maurice Rollinat, and when Yvette Guilbert came to sing, with green dress and black gloves, in her inimitable manner, the songs of Léon Xanroff, they were obliged to push their way through tight packed gangways, and to climb over chairs to reach the miniature platform.

Whew! it was hot! The gas stove in winter was evil-smelling. I am not sure that the gas stove was not the cause of the break-up of the Caméléon. One night—a bitterly cold night when snow lay on the ground—a number of people, coming from the over-heated room filled with the fumes of the poisonous stove, into the fresh open air, reeled and fell ill. One of them—Florence Heywood, an American woman who lectures in the Louvre on the pictures and has written excellent books about them—fainted in the street. The snowy ground was like a battlefield, strewn with human bodies. Cabs were hastily commissioned and the casualties were removed from the scene of action. This incident was recorded in the newspapers and the attendance immediately fell off.

It was a pity, for certainly the causeries of the Caméléon were unique. Mercereau himself could not be induced to speak of his own experiences in public, but in his weird apartment on the Boulevard du Port-Royal, crowded with bric-à-brac and somewhat mournful ecclesiastical mementoes, he has told me of the Abbaye, which he founded with seven others, some of whom have since become famous, in the year 1907. It is a memorable episode that is far too little known.

The Phalanstery of intellectuals, young men devoted to the arts, took up its abode in an abandoned domain at Créteil, on the banks of the Marne. They had a park and a kitchen garden, but the buildings were in decay. There was an abundance of vegetation, and climbing plants covered the walls and roofs. It appeared to be an ideal residence for romantic youth, but alas! it was falling in ruins, and was poor shelter from the weather. Yet René Arcos, Henri Barzun, Gleizes, the painter, Charles Vildrac, the dramatist, became plumbers and masons and carpenters and decorators, and arranged the rooms, setting up a studio, a printing works, a kitchen, a refectory, a theatre.

A typographer, Linard, joined the group, and taught them how to compose type. Georges Duhamel, the brother-in-law of

Vildrac, was then pursuing his medical studies—though afterwards he became the best-known writer of the group. A room was reserved for him. There was, besides, Albert Doyen, the musician, who later trained working men and women to sing and gave great popular concerts in the Trocadéro. They had little money, but they agreed to share whatever they had.

Certainly it was a hazardous venture. The members of the Abbaye had noble dreams, but they experienced dreadful disillusions. They worked in the garden, did their own housekeeping, put in four hours a day in the printing works, and devoted the rest of their time to writing and painting.

Others who were associated with them were Marcel Lenoir, the painter who covers the walls of Montparnasse with his manifestoes and diatribes, Marinetti, the Italian who invented Futurism, Jules Romains, who was to triumph on the stage with "Knock," and who was the inspirer of the school which gave itself the name of Unanimism. They were visited by all the ideologues of the world. Some of these ideologues blamed them for consecrating part of their time to "useless work," such as poetry and painting. Others reproached them because they did not leave their doors wide open for vagabonds to enter. One pedagogue with advanced views considered that they should have a common mistress, and came, out of breath, from Switzerland, to give them this paternal counsel.

The winter arrived with its train of miseries. Cold and hunger sapped their enthusiasm. They found it difficult to live on faith and fraternal affection. They fought against the inevitable disaster as long as possible. Certainly they printed some notable works, but when at last Anatole France generously confided to them a manuscript to be luxuriously published, they had not the material means of carrying out their designs. The Earthly Paradise became lugubrious, and the frozen park bore no resemblance to the legendary Garden of Eden.

"When one is cold and hungry," Mercereau told me, "one discovers that faith, enthusiasm, and love, require a physical body. When there is question only of the ideal, no man is more fervent and fanatical than I am, but when there is question of reality, I become sceptical, ironical, and pessimistic. I have paid dearly to learn the true worth of human efforts."

The project was dead—that project which was to have revealed to an astonished generation a new artistic and literary movement. Afterwards Mercereau organised exhibitions of paintings in various countries, and at the Salon d'Automne which made a place for writers as well as artists introduced

many French authors to the public. Antoine, when he was Director of the Odéon, on the suggestion of Mercereau, persuaded leading actors to read passages of the younger men. Paul Fort asked Mercereau to assist him in the direction of the finest literary review that has ever appeared in France, "Vers et Prose."

Then came the ill-fated Caméléon. Mercereau has gained nothing from his devotion to the arts, but if the full literary history of these latter years were to be written, it would plainly appear that he has been one of the most notable *animateurs* of his time.

Of a more conventional type are the Conférences (Lectures) of the Université des Annales founded by Yvonne Sarcey, daughter of Francisque Sarcey who, for many years, was the undisputed authority on dramatic art, attached to the Temps. Everybody called him Uncle Sarcey: that is why Yvonne Sarcey signed her articles in Les Annales, Cousine Yvonne. It is curious how in France posts often remain in the same family: after Francisque Sarcey, his son-in-law Adolphe Brisson took up the pen, and when he retired, Pierre Brisson, the grandson of the great Francisque, continued to lay down the law. There were indeed short interims—notably when André Rivoire, who was, as he told me, chiefly interested in the writing of poetical plays, spent a year or two on the Temps. With these exceptions, dramatic criticism in France has been dominated by three generations of the Sarcey family.

Francisque Sarcey was a good journalist. He had a profound culture. He aimed at clarity and gaiety. He never grew angry, and his good humour pleased the public. When his Sunday article appeared, it had an immediate effect on the receipts of the theatres he praised or condemned. In those days the theatrical feuilleton of the Temps occupied twelve quarter columns. Today it has shrunk to six. Diplomatic affairs have crushed out these lengthy articles on the latest vaudeville. Jules Lemaître was the dramatic critic of the Journal des Débats at the same time as Sarcey was attached to the Temps. Now, in the Débats, Henri Bidou, once a military critic, supplies the dramatic criticism.

It is too much to expect that the old should understand the new. Francisque Sarcey was opposed to the experiment of the Théâtre Libre of Antoine, and of the Oeuvre of Lugné-Poë. He railed at Ibsen—"the false Shakespeare of Norway"—and at Maurice Maeterlinck—"the false Shakespeare of Belgium." He did not appreciate Henry Becque, the most powerful realist

dramatist France has had. Having established his rules he could not tolerate any author who departed from them. But rules change, and the truth about any art is that there are no rules. Thus Sarcey is demoded. What he championed has collapsed. What he attacked has survived. Yet one should say of him that he was a great critic, for if he was not perspicacious enough to discover new talent, he defended with reason, with passion, with skill, the accepted traditions of his time. Adolphe Brisson was a worthy successor, and today Pierre Brisson holds the scepter with dignity.

Dignity is the keynote of the lectures organised by Yvonne Sarcey who married Adolphe Brisson. Nothing is said that might shock the *jeunes filles du monde*. Nevertheless, these lectures are extremely interesting and instructive, and I have seen pass, in splendid procession, most of the celebrities of Paris. There was the picturesque Jean Richepin, whose lectures on La Fontaine are unforgettable. There was Frédéric Masson, rather heavy but remarkably erudite in all that pertains to Napoléon. Henri-Robert, the brilliant bâtonnier, leader of the French Bar for many years, would talk wittily and gracefully on such subjects as the reign of Louis XVI and the Revolution. Pierre de Nolhac, the Conservateur of the Versailles Palace, would relate anecdotes about the Court of Marie-Antoinette. Others dealing with historical subjects were Funck-Brentano, of the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal; Hélène Vacaresco, the eloquent Rumanian poetess; Henry Bordeaux, a popular though conventional novelist; Mgr. Baudrillart, the alert Director of the Catholic Institute. The origins of Romanticism in France and in Germany were studied by these Society audiences.

The theatre, as might be expected, was treated in many conferences—by the beautiful Rosemonde Gérard, widow of Edmond Rostand, by Jean Cocteau, the spoilt darling of the younger generation, by Jacques Copeau,—an incomparable reader of plays whose glorious experiment at the Vieux-Colombier deserved a better fate, by Georges Berr, of the Comédie-Française, and by Madame Dussane of the same National Theatre. Other lectures were on aspects of the intellectual life: Paul Valéry related his souvenirs of Huysmans and Mallarmé; Claude Farrère, the friend of Pierre Louys, recalled memories of the author of Chansons de Bilitis; the Comtesse de Noailles tried to show the place of the arts in the workaday world; Maurice Rostand revealed "the secret of the poet"; Jane Catulle-Mendès spoke of "modern sensibility"; André

Maurois fresh from his triumphs in England and America discoursed on the interaction of peoples.

Then there were musical afternoons, with Georges Chepfer and Lucy Vauthrin in their repertory of old French chansons; with Yvonne Gall, of the Opéra, singing Russian, Spanish, and French melodies; with Yvette Guilbert delighting us by her interpretation of satiric songs of all ages; with Muratore, in Italian opera. André Warnod was the authority on artists in vogue—Foujita, the Japanese painter, Van Dongen, the Dutch portraitist, Utrillo, the Bohemian of Montmartre . . .

This is the baldest summary of a single season's program. Perhaps Léon Daudet and René Benjamin are the best of the Paris conférenciers. But I cannot enumerate the scores of societies which organise lectures. There are learned lectures at the Sorbonne; lectures on pictures at the Louvre; lectures for Feminists; lectures for Theosophists; lectures on Psychoanalysis; lectures on International Politics—lectures sociological, scientific, artistic, philosophical, religious, popular—lectures of all sorts and sizes, of which the lecture-loving public of Paris can never have enough.

I have given a number of lectures myself in Paris; and although I do not claim that I excel in this branch of my activities I have, from my experience, drawn up ten commandments which might well be followed by lecturers in other cities than Paris:

1. It is better to sacrifice precision to spontaneity: to speak from as few written notes as possible, and never to read a lecture. You will lose in niceness of phrase, but you will gain greatly in every other respect.

2. Do not in advance rigidly fix the space of time which you are to occupy. It depends upon your effect on the audience whether you should speak for half an hour or an hour. Be so full of your subject that you can continue if the public manifestly wishes you to continue; or conclude at any moment on a high note if it appears desirable to finish.

3. If you strike a note that obviously interests your audience, return to it, elaborate it, pursue your advantage. If a pronouncement falls flat or is received with marked hostility, glide away quickly—with a jocular observation.

4. Remember that you are not lecturing to entertain yourself, but to entertain and instruct your audience. Have strong convictions, for only if your own heart is in your theme will you capture the hearts of others.

5. For the most part adopt a friendly tone, be good-tem-

pered, display bonhomie; never be pedantic or authoritative. Assume always that your audience is completely ignorant of the subject, but persuade it that it really knows more than you —that you are merely reminding it of its own knowledge. Be simple, not pretentious.

6. When you are applauded, turn the interruption to your profit by arranging the sequence of your thoughts. Do not vainly exult, but take advantage of the respite to consider the order in which you should present your subsequent points.

7. If anybody challenges a statement, reply instantly. Be courteous but be positive. It is highly important that you should not produce an impression of embarrassment. Better to give a feeble answer forcibly, than a forceful answer feebly. Above all, no hesitation.

8. Beware of ready-made phrases. There is a strong temptation to repeat a passage learnt by rote; but it will generally appear displaced and in contrast with the looser form of your previous utterances. Also, avoid irony; it is rarely understood.

9. Do not be monotonous either in delivery or in matter. Let your voice be flexible, rising and falling, and pass rapidly from the serious to the familiar, from laughter to tears.

10. Address yourself specially to individuals, selecting now a sympathetic listener who will be flattered by your attention, then an auditor who is showing signs of boredom but who will pluck up fresh interest if your eyes are fixed on him; talk alternately to those in the front row and to those in the back row. And when you sit down remember that the task is not finished, that you will be watched until you disappear. The audience should feel regret at your departure.

Chapter VIII

A STUDIO IN THE SKY

My own apartment in Paris for many years was—and is still—perched on an exceptionally elevated point—on the rising ground of Montparnasse. Seven stories high—an unusual height for the French capital—it looked over the whole panorama of the city. That vast studio, glass-fronted along its entire breadth, is a sort of framework for the towers and steeples of Paris. From it one sees an unparalleled roofscape; the silhouettes of Notre Dame, the Observatoire, the Val-de-Grâce, the Panthéon, the Palais de Justice, the Saint-Sulpice, the Sacré-Coeur, the Dôme of the Invalides, the Tour Eiffel, the Trocadéro, the Arc de Triomphe, and the rest of the famous monuments. From my roof-garden the prospect was even clearer: there was Mont-Valérien, and the wooded hills which enclose Paris as in a cup, and I could, on certain days, have, as the saying is, counted the houses on Montmartre, so plainly were they picked out against the sky. Somehow this survey of the city gave me a sense of possession; it was veritably my own Paris, spread there below me. On starry nights, when the terrestrial and the celestial lights seemed to consort with each other, this sense of possession was intensified.

I cannot enumerate the painters and writers and politicians who have spent evenings in the high studio. Booth Tarkington, I understand, at one time lived in the house. Then came a French Senator who held his receptions here and afterwards a French poet whose wife was a well-known dressmaker. My immediate predecessor was an American cinema actress who had black curtains, black walls, black carpet, and relieved this funeral effect by a vivid red-painted staircase.

From this vantage-point, as from a watch-tower in the sky, I watched the coming and going of many men and women. For the moment let me try to recall a few British and American and—I suppose I ought to add—Irish writers who have succeeded each other. Most of them I have had the privilege of entertaining in my sky studio.

It has been my lot to spend many pleasant hours with a score of men whose names are gratefully known by vast audiences without stirring from this Paris nook. To the French capital they all come sooner or later. Some of them stay for

months, perhaps for years. Others merely pass through. But they derive inspiration from this teeming intellectual hive. They are stimulated. Paris for them is like a heady wine.

The American and the British authors find in France a change of scene. That is itself a fact of some importance. "What do they know of England who only England know," sang Kipling, himself a frequenter of Paris, and there are exiles —expatriates as they prefer to call themselves—in Paris who know more about the United States, about Ireland, about England, than anybody who lives in those countries. They can see these lands with detachment. Moreover, they discover fresh images, they can spread new colours on their palette, they see even their compatriots around them in a clearer light, and they contrast them and their manners with the French and their manners. They are no longer insular. They catch the cosmopolitan spirit. It always seems to me that the Britisher or the American who stays at home betrays a quality which, for want of a better word, we must call provincialism. One should see many other towns than Paris, but nevertheless Paris, which sums up every other city, will suffice to take the provincialism from the majority of writers. Generally in some indefinable but unmistakable way it broadens the outlook of those who take contact with it.

First in this brief account of a few of the leading men of letters whom I have met in Paris, and with some of whom I have developed close friendships, let me put Hilaire Belloc. I do so because though he is of French extraction, and of all men of my acquaintance has the deepest Latin culture, yet, in spite of his love of the Latin tradition, his truly European range, he is, by a strange paradox, the sturdiest of Britishers. He reminds me of William Cobbett. He looks like the John Bull of the caricaturist—short elephantine legs, heavy body, broad shoulders, red face set off by side-whiskers. When I gaze on the portrait of the Frenchman, Henry Beyle—who wrote as Stendhal—I find precisely the same features. It would easily be possible to pass off a portrait of Stendhal as a portrait of Belloc. Perhaps therefore John Bull is a myth. Perhaps John Bull is just as French as he is English.

The best portrait that has been done of Belloc is the plate which the clever caricaturist, Low, made for the New Statesman. Another reason for giving Belloc a foremost place is that he is, in my opinion, the greatest master of the English language alive today. It may be that he has too many messages for his generation. It may be that he is too prolific. He has lost repu-

tation by his versatility. But how supple, how rhythmical, how forceful, how exact, is his use of words. He has no equal in our day. His irony is as devastating as the irony of Swift, but in addition he has the lustiness of Rabelais.

He did me the honour of calling on me in my Paris apartment oftener than upon any other resident in the French capital. He would make his appearance unexpectedly. From Spain, from Italy, from the Black Forest, or from the Northern lands, he would suddenly arrive, in the course of his wanderings, at Paris. Usually was he dressed carelessly—that is to say, he wore a shabby black coat, and an incredible hat which he stuffed into his pocket, and gaping elastic side boots of good tramping leather which were specially made for him and cost dear.

"I have just come up from the South," he would say, "and if I am to come to dinner you must accept me as I am. I have no other clothes."

Needless to say he was accepted. "Why do the police of different countries take me for a tramp?" he would ask innocently. "They are always down on anybody who looks poor." And he would relate anecdotes of his arrest on various occasions.

"What are all these rules about dress?" he would demand. "Now there is Lady —— who asked me to dinner in London. But when I was dressing in my pied-à-terre I found that my dress waistcoat had disappeared. What was I to do? I rang her up. 'Dear Lady ——,' I said, 'I hardly know whether I can venture to come tonight. I have no waistcoat. Tell me frankly whether I should put in an appearance.' She told me to come as I pleased. So I put on a swallow-tail coat and an ordinary waistcoat buttoned up to the neck. But do you know that I felt that the company thought I looked foolish. Why?"

Sometimes he would fulminate against the modern Press. "One cannot take a step without being molested. In Regent Street I met Mrs. —— and walked along with her. Would you believe it, next day there were paragraphs about us in the London newspapers!"

Again, he was positively angry because a newspaper had published his portrait without asking his permission. He wrote a severe letter to the Editor complaining of this lack of courtesy.

His "crotchets"—as they are called—made it sometimes difficult for him—the most entertaining of writers—to contribute to the newspapers. Editors began to believe that he was incapable of keeping out of his articles references to the corrup-

tion of the Press, the incompetence of Parliament, the blighting influence of wealth, and a defence of Roman Catholicism. These and other matters of vital importance certainly were constantly present in his mind. Why should they not be? They are of the most vital concern to mankind. But apparently newspapers become uneasy if anybody endeavours seriously to discuss serious subjects.

Three of his books were published in the same season. I ventured to suggest to him that he was overdoing it. People would not buy three books of the same author at the same time.

"You are right," he said, "and the proof is that I cannot afford to send you copies of them all. Why do friends of authors expect him to make presents of his books to them? They do not expect the grocer to give them groceries or the stockbroker to give them shares. They seem to think that an author gets his own books for nothing . . . Choose for yourself which of my books you would like. Would you like my book on Economics, or the new volume of my History, or the log book of my recent Cruise?"

I chose the Cruise of The Nona for highly as I appreciate his historical and his economic writings, I still think he is at his best when he describes his travels, and interlards his narratives with miscellaneous speculations, as in his Path to Rome which is a perpetual joy. But he is, besides, an incomparable essayist, as in Hills and the Sea; a vigorous polemist as in The Jews; a lively story-teller as in The Girondin; a marvellous satirist as in Emmanuel Burden—which he told me he regarded as his best piece of work. Emmanuel Burden is, in fact, unapproached in our times as a sustained satire—and yet it is probably one of the least known of his books.

"America is beginning to discover me," he remarked. "My Marie-Antoinette written twenty years ago, is having a new lease of life in the United States. Of course I would like to be a best-seller. Who would not? Why do practitioners of our wretched trade pretend that they do not care whether their books sell or not?"

What has he not done? He has even written detective yarns which his friend G. K. Chesterton has comically illustrated.

"You should, at the beginning, have taken half a dozen pennames," I said. "You have written sixty or seventy books and you have shown a specialist's knowledge of military science, of topography, of finances, and you have written poetry which will endure as long as the language endures. But people like to stick a label on authors. You could easily have made six

distinct reputations, whereas skill in many things is considered in our day to be a deadly sin."

"That may be so," he admitted. "I have sometimes thought of it. My advice to a young writer—who is merely thinking of fame—is to concentrate on one subject. Let him, when he is twenty, write about the earthworm. Let him continue for forty years to write of nothing but the earthworm. When he is sixty pilgrims will make a hollow path with their feet to the door of the world's great authority on the earthworm. They will knock at his door and humbly beg to be allowed to see the Master of the Earthworm."

I think it was after this conversation that we dedicated books to each other—I, my "Mr. Paname: A Paris Fantasia"; he, his "Miniatures of French History."

Of all conversationalists, Hilaire Belloc is the most varied and vivid, the most suggestive, the best informed. He has an anecdote drawn from his personal experiences or from his historical studies appropriate to every subject. It is of course true, as my friends Colonel and Mrs. Bonsal remarked, after I had entertained them to dinner with Belloc, that, when he talks, the Beatitudes will keep breaking in.

One day I had gone down to Rouen. The first person that I saw sitting on a café terrace by the river front, near the old bridge, was Hilaire Belloc. With him were his son, and Warre, whose father was headmaster at Eton, and another man whose name I have forgotten. "What on earth are you doing here?" I cried. "And you?" he parried. "I have come down to see the fêtes of Joan of Arc," I answered. "And I to sail my boat."

His boat, the Nona, was, it appeared, anchored at Dieppe. It was being painted by a French sailor. "There is a boat for you!" he exclaimed. "I have had it since I was a boy and it is as good as new."

One of his companions, however, had a different idea. "It has become absolutely rotten," he told me. "You can poke your finger through the sides. All that has now been done is to put a little tar on it, and to paint it afresh. How brave we are to put to sea!"

"This is the last day," said another, "of dry socks! We shall have our feet wet for a fortnight."

He loved that old boat, safe or not, as a man may love a mistress, and would sail it in the strongest seas. He seemed to delight in danger, and his companions, with the strange con-

scious audacity of typical Englishmen, were willing to share the risks for the sake of the adventure.

We had a merry lunch together—a Dutch feast—at a little eating-place of the town. Belloc acted as leader and worked out our respective expenses nicely, and we each contributed to the cost of the meal. Then Belloc left us to find a little room in a tiny hotel where he could sleep quietly for an hour. Later we left them as they set off on foot through the forest to take their boat. The next day a great gale arose. It lasted for a week. Often did we think of Belloc and his crew with wet socks, somewhere on the seas, in that boat through whose sides one could push a forefinger.

I am surer about the lasting fame of Belloc than about that of any other man.

Now an American: Sinclair Lewis. Red Lewis we called him in his Paris days. Tall, angular, jerky in his manner, subject to fits of moody silence, and then breaking out into interminable talk, he was a lively person, and he was perpetually the center of lively incidents. Yet I remember on our first meeting, when he had just come from England, he gave me the impression of a country parson who was trying to look as sober as possible. He was dressed in solemn black—severe clothes of the English cut. He actually wore a monocle—or rather he made great play with this eyeglass, twirling it round on its cord. That too was English. Also, he had white spats. Another English touch. He carried a cane. Still more English. At that stage of his career the most American of writers was the most English.

Lord Northcliffe used to laugh when he told me of his landing in America. He debarked from the steamer and a little later in his hotel read a newspaper. Running across the top of it, in a streamer heading, were the words:

"Without Spats or Monocle, Northcliffe Lands."

Apparently Northcliffe had shattered the American conception of the Englishman. Certainly Sinclair Lewis shattered my conception of the American.

That night he was, presumably under the influence of his visit to England, solemn, restrained, and silent. His little head he carried aslant over his elongated body. It was crowned by his flaring red hair. By his side sat George Slocombe, an English newspaperman who had taken a tremendous interest in Russia, his pink face decorated by a magnificent red beard. The red beard was the only Bolshevik feature of Slocombe, but it suf-

ficed to earn him the friendship of Chicherin, Litvinov, Rakowsky, Krassin and the rest.

Red hair and red beard. We were in an atmosphere of redness. But Slocombe's redness, I remarked, is like that of a radish: it is on the surface. Scratch it and you will find that inside he is very white.

There sat Red Lewis of whose exploits everybody was talking—of scenes in the conventional haunts of polite society, of unorthodox behaviour which had amused London—and he was as demure as a clergyman who does not possess the habits of Elmer Gantry. Slocombe, on the contrary, was singing old sea chanties, of which he had a stock. The spirit was willing if the voice was weak, and we were asked over and over again what we should do with a drunken sailor, and were frequently informed that she had a dark and rolling eye.

The next time, however, Red Lewis woke up with a vengeance. We were at dinner. He monopolised the conversation. He spoke of everybody by their Christian name. I was Sisley for him and he spoke much of Gilbert and of Hugh. I had to think hard to put the surnames on his personages.

"We are getting fed up with these English novelists who come on lecture tours and get away with good American dollars. I am not saying that for you, Sisley, but I told Hugh himself that it was too thick. Last year there was Bertrand —whom, of course, I like, and he is in a different line. I don't think Gilbert quite went down. A lot of silly women laughed when he poked fun at America, but he certainly overdid it. I am not going to say anything against Philip, but perhaps we've had enough of him. As for James, he is a likeable fellow. No, good luck to them! Only we are rather idiotic to stand for it."

So it went on, but he presently drew me aside, and we had a talk about his methods.

"People think I write glibly, but I don't. I make a thorough study of my subject. I live among the people I describe. I have spent a year studying medicine and medical men. Went through everything. I don't stick down the first thing that comes into my head . . .

"It's terrible how people expect you to remember them. They come up to you wherever you are and say, 'I'll bet you don't know who I am and where I met you.' Yesterday I replied to one of this tribe 'You win.'

"That reminds me of Whistler, who used to hang around these parts, didn't he? Somebody came up to him and said, 'I

would just like to say good day to you, Mr. Whistler.' So Whistler replied: 'Well, now you've said it. Good day.'

"No, I don't care what the critics say. The more they say, the better the book sells. Here's one of them who says my last book is a compound of bunk, ignorance, and lies. Don't they wish they could put over bunk, ignorance, and lies!"

He was voluble but always sensible. He flung himself on a couch and his long loose limbs grew longer and looser. He jumped to his feet, strode across the room, and he was taller and lankier than ever. His face glowed and his hair caught fire.

Lewis told me of his beginnings. He had written, as I remember, a good deal for newspapers, and had published a novel or two which made little stir. Then one year he found he had made ten thousand dollars, and had only spent five. Thus he was a year in hand. What should he do? Most people would have reckoned that they were going ahead, and could by perseverance make fifteen thousand dollars, and perhaps work up to twenty. Not so Sinclair Lewis. He figured out that he could afford to take a year off, and write a really good novel. He did. He wrote Main Street. It caught the current. It stated what many Americans had obscurely felt. Main Street was a huge success. Since then each of his books has been an event. But it took pluck to do what Lewis did.

To coin familiar expressions is a test of success. Everybody knows what is meant by Main Street. Everybody knows what is meant by Babbitt. They have definite connotations. They have come to stay.

I saw much of him especially during the period of his matrimonial perturbations and liked him immensely. Most people liked him. But occasionally he fell foul of the so-called American intellectuals of Montparnasse. His quarrel with Harold Stearns made a great commotion in the Quarter. Lewis went back to America one year, disgruntled by the celebrities of the Quarter. For some reason or other he picked on Harold Stearns, who had made a promising beginning with his "America and the Young Intellectual" and his "Civilisation in the United States," but who afterwards became interested in racing, and stayed in Paris without producing. In Mencken's American Mercury Lewis attacked "the geniuses and their disciples who frequent the Café du Dôme at Montparnasse." The main attack was on a person whom Mr. Lewis referred to as the "very father and seer of the Dôme" . . . "an authority on living without labouring."

Stearns retorted hotly: "I will not join Mr. Lewis in a com-

petition of ignominy. Just because Mr. Lewis, by his malicious personal attack, chooses to expose himself at last in public as a cad and bounder, he cannot expect me, in spite of my great admiration for his salesmanship talents, to imitate him.

"Discussing his article objectively, it is chaotic, cheap, inaccurate, and absurd. He missed both the good points and the bad ones of the American Montparnasse colony,—the good points, because he couldn't understand them, and the bad ones, because he so perfectly exemplifies them.

"The chief good point, of course, is that remotely, somehow, somewhere, even the dumbest American expatriates have been touched by the spiritual forces of French life. The realisation that there is something in France which he had missed was what finally drove Mr. Lewis back to a country where his publications have a dignity which, to Europeans, is simply incomprehensible.

"Many of the eccentricities and absurdities which Mr. Lewis mentions are, of course, quite true. In fairness to the people mentioned, I ought to point out, as one of them, that they are only grouped together by Mr. Lewis's spite."

These personal quarrels were in the note of the Quarter. They caused a flutter, but they hurt nobody. I still look to Stearns to justify the expectations that were placed in him when he was a shining light of the New Republic.

Ford Madox Ford took up his residence in Paris some time after the war. He was my neighbour and quickly took the habit of dropping in upon me in the evenings. I have lived so long abroad that I hardly know whether people do drop in upon each other in America and England, but they certainly don't in France. But then we are not in France. We are somewhere in that imaginary country called Bohemia. So I welcomed his visits and indeed would have wished them to have been more numerous.

He would read to me, for example, as I stated in my "In and About Paris," the proofs of his appreciation of his old friend and collaborator Joseph Conrad, sitting on my high roof-garden, looking out on the myriad lights of Paris confounded with the stars of an autumn night; or he would tell me of the historical novel with Marshal Ney for hero, which he had planned for many years. The statue of Marshal Ney, "bravest of the brave," stood close by, near the Closerie des Lilas, almost on the spot where he was shot for espousing the cause of Napoléon after his return from the Isle of Elba. I think it

was that statue by Rude which induced him to take up the theme.

"The execution of Ney was," he said, "the Sacco and Vanzetti case of its day. There was just as much excitement about it . . . "

An enormous looking man is Ford. He is as tall as I am and appears broader—which is tantamount to saying that he has a giant's bulk. His eyes are of the softest blue—the colour of forget-me-nots—and his hair is of the softest gold—the colour of flax. Esther Bowen—Stella—who often came round with him, is a promising painter who has made an excellent likeness of him. It represents him playing a game of patience with his mouth half open—like a fly-trap, as we used to say.

When he was stuck in the morass of composition and wondered what to write next, he always took a pack of cards, shuffled them, sat down before a green table, and played patience with himself. That is a good way of wooing the coy Muses. In the portrait the flaxen hair, the pale blue eyes, the open mouth, suggest passivity—that is, if one believes in any form of inspiration, receptivity. Ford wrote only after he had, as it were, hypnotised himself in this manner. Most of us who are writing men have some such device for bringing our subjective mind to work.

Because I had consented, at a critical time in Europe, to become, for a few years, the Chief Correspondent of The Times, Ford regarded me as an official person—or at least a semi-official person. I have always regarded myself as a Bohemian. It is difficult for me to understand the respect with which I am still often treated because of that Times period.

But Ford is a true Englishman, and so looks upon The Times with awe. Partly this is because his father, Dr. Francis Hueffer, was for many years the Musical Critic of The Times. In that position, in the old days, he was the supreme authority on his particular subject.

It was because I was in his eyes a semi-official person that he called upon me to be the arbiter in various disputes that arose between him and contributors to the Transatlantic Review. One of these disputes I shall relate in my account of James Joyce.

Private reasons induced him to change his name from Hueffer to Ford, and from a literary point of view Ford Madox Ford is certainly much simpler and altogether better than Ford Madox Hueffer.

Once I was able to render service to Ford through my sup-

posedly semi-official status. He was going to America for the usual purpose. He had, despite Sinclair Lewis's dislike of English lecturers, been invited to lecture in New York, and in other towns. Although he had often made the trip before, he was delighted at the prospect. He replenished his wardrobe, he rehearsed his lectures. Everything was in readiness. His cabin had been booked and his visa had been obtained.

The night before the sailing of the ship Mrs. Ford came to my house in tears. I had a dinner party, but I excused myself. She showed me a message which had just been received from the American Consulate. It stated that the visa had been suspended. Inquiries would be made, and although nothing could be promised, the visa might afterwards be renewed.

An official inquiry—that might take months! What was it all about? There had been several sensational cases in the newspapers of visitors to the United States being turned back or kept at Ellis Island. Could I do something?

I confessed I could not see what I could do. Yet I promised to think matters over. The next morning I decided that I would accompany Ford to the offices of the American Consul and ask for an explanation.

At that time I had not met the gentleman who was in charge of the American Consulate; but fortunately he knew my name, and had read articles of mine in the New York Times, the New Republic, the Atlantic Monthly, Harper's Magazine, The Christian Science Monitor and so forth. He professed to be an admirer of my political thinking. Moreover, we had a common English friend, the great journalist J. Alfred Spender.

This was an excellent introduction, and while Ford remained silent in his chair, I kept the conversation on these political and personal matters. But at last I had to declare the reason of my visit.

"This afternoon the ship on which Ford has booked his passage sails. He obtained a visa a month ago. Suddenly, at the last minute, your department has withdrawn it. That is a serious step. I am bound to point out that unless you have good cause for this measure it will be impossible to prevent a new scandal breaking out about American immigration practices. After all, Ford is a distinguished writer, and he cannot be thus treated without serious reasons."

The Consul grew grave. "I am obliged to you for your statement, but I do not see how I can behave otherwise."

"At least you will tell me why you have withdrawn the visa," I insisted.

"I cannot do that. This is purely an office matter. We have received information which may or may not be true but it is our business to examine it."

"You well know that an examination will take a long time. In the meantime the ship will have sailed, the passage money will be lost, the lecture dates will be forfeited, there will be a frightful row, and indeed Ford is so indignant that he will refuse a later visa."

"It is extremely unpleasant," admitted the Consul.

"You said that you had information—may I ask if it was conveyed in a letter?"

He nodded.

Thereupon I endeavoured to point out that the suspension of the visa was utterly unreasonable. It might be that the charge, whatever it was, was preposterous—as in fact it was—and yet some mischievous letter-writer could prevent the fulfilment of perfectly proper engagements, and compel the American authorities to insult gratuitously an English man of letters. I would not ask for details, but, as man to man, in the presence of Ford, forgetting for a moment his official position, I begged the Consul to acquaint me with the general character of the accusation. Perhaps we could refute it then and there.

With great reluctance the Consul intimated that somebody had comically alleged that Ford was going to America "for immoral purposes." What a commentary on the American regulations! I could not help laughing heartily at such an absurd and obviously baseless charge—but I emphasised the serious side of this procedure. The most celebrated person going on a mission to the United States could be held up by an irresponsible letterwriter, who chose at the eleventh hour to launch a foolish suggestion.

"You will make American law a laughing stock. Apart from the idiocy of this charge, I can personally assure you that I know precisely where Ford is going, and why he is going. He is going alone. He is acquainted, so far as we are aware, with nobody on the boat. He is to speak in Women's Clubs, in Public Halls, and in Universities. Can you not accept me as security?"

Finally the Consul agreed that he would be officially "covered," if I, as a reputable "semi-public" person, would give him assurances in writing to that effect. Naturally I sat down then and there, and wrote such a letter. The Consul behaved with tact and courtesy. No complaint can be made against

him. Only thanks can be expressed for his exercise of common-sense. But I do suggest that the rules are ridiculous. We had just time to rush, with a letter from the Consul, to the proper official, obtain a fresh visa, and put Ford in the train.

Ford claimed to be, in spite of his comparative youth, the doyen of English writers, and when I asked him how that could be, he explained that he was brought up in the pre-Raphaelite circle, and began to write as a boy. His mother was Catherine Madox Brown (Mrs. Hueffer)—the daughter of Ford Madox Brown, the painter. Brown was the Master of Dante Gabriel Rosetti, poet and painter, whose brother, William Michael, married Mrs. Hueffer's sister. One should add that Mrs. Hueffer was herself a painter of talent, and in her younger days regularly exhibited at the Royal Academy. Her children are all writers—Ford, Juliet Soskice, and Oliver Hueffer.

Many are the reminiscences of the pre-Raphaelites that I have listened to in the studio of Ford, or on the terrace of the Closerie des Lilas, or on my own roof-garden. That movement was one which greatly influenced English art and literature. Ford himself has passed through several different periods. He was, with the pre-Raphaelites, mystical and mediæval; he caught something of the subtlety of Henry James; he became romantic with Joseph Conrad. His associations with these and other writers affected his sensitive spirit.

He came to what we had begun to call the Quarter after a spell of pig-breeding somewhere in Sussex. His lungs had been damaged by gassing in the war. His ambition was to repeat in Paris the success he had achieved as an Editor with the early English Review. So he launched the Transatlantic Review (whose name should really be spelt without capital letters). It was an interesting if unequal publication. Some of the writers whom he found were, like the little girl who had a little curl right in the middle of her forehead, very very good, but when they were bad they were horrid. Still, it was his idea, as he would have said, of a magazine, and it does not much matter whether it is anybody else's idea.

That reminds me of an incident in a Welsh castle. It was during the war, and Ford with other officers, were quartered in the castle. Sir Edmund Gosse stayed for a short time. Somebody pointed to a big stuffed bird in the hall, and asked what it was. "It is a flamingo," said Sir Edmund Gosse. "A flamingo? —that's not my idea of a flamingo." "No, Sir, but it's God's idea of a flamingo."

The magazine was the excuse for many gatherings. At first, when Ford was living on the Boulevard Arago, by the great awesome French prison, ironically named La Santé, he extended his invitations at random. In the cafés of the Quarter it was broadcasted that there would be a party at Ford's. The result was that the most nondescript crowd appeared. There was plenty of drink to which the unknown guests helped themselves. When they had drunk too much they would fight. Ford had to assert his authority—and his strength—to get rid of them.

This was too trying. So the parties were transferred to a Bal Musette behind the Panthéon. It was in a working-class district, and the habitual dancers were astonished at this strange apparition of artists and writers and hangers-on. Still, they were in nobody's house, and Ford was not responsible for them. On the whole they were a sorry lot.

Much better were the parties in the studio of the rue Notre-Dame-des-Champs. A selection was made. Here were real people really trying to do something. A phonograph was set going and the guests danced to their heart's content. Ford himself was indefatigable: a trifle heavy, but enthusiastic. Ezra Pound was a supreme dancer: whoever has not seen Ezra Pound, ignoring all the rules of tango and of fox-trot, kicking up fantastic heels in a highly personal Charleston, closing his eyes as his toes nimbly scattered right and left, has missed one of the spectacles which reconcile us to life.

If it is not too disrespectful, I used to think of Ford and Pound, when they danced, as the Elephant and the Mule.

It was an interesting assembly, and out of these parties there veritably came a new Paris movement. The names of the Fordians are written in the Transatlantic Review which ran for about a year. Ford was discovered by America and his novels about the war had large circulations.

"Don't ask me to explain," he said. "I have written sixty books and more. They had their measure of success. Some of them were at least as good as anything I am doing now. Suddenly I am, without apparent reason, among the best-sellers."

"That is the luck of the literary game," I remarked. "You never can tell."

But above all, there came out of the Transatlantic Review, Ernest Hemingway. I had met Hemingway years before. He was corresponding for a Canadian newspaper which gave him a poor enough living. At the same time he was making experiments in story-telling. I happened to be the President of an

Association to which he belonged, and at its meetings he would chat with me about his ideals and his ambitions. He was seeking a simple realistic style. He wanted to set down life as he saw it. Conversation in novels was too high-falutin'. He intended to make it as he supposed it to be. It is, of course, easy to parody Hemingway:— "What are you doing?" "Nothing particular." "Well, let's go over to the Select." "Righto!" We went over to the Select. I was feeling rather bad. He looked pretty sick too. We sat down. The waiter came—the fat one. "What will you have to drink?" "I don't know." "What will you have?" "Well, mine's —" So it goes on for pages. But it is unfair to suggest that this is the essential Hemingway. He has a vivid eye, a strong direct individuality, and though I do not think this external reporting takes us far, he struck a need of the hour. It was perhaps a healthy reaction against the sophistication which was smothering literature.

He looked too for brutal effects. He persuaded me to accompany him to prize fights because prize fights gave him those primitive physical sensations that he meant to turn into literature. He would get excited and cheered the bespattered pugilists. Boxing made a great appeal to the younger men in Paris then. It was gory. It did not require brains to practice or to understand. If a white man could be matched against a black man, so much the better. That gave additional colour to the picture.

But the negroes were not always as vigorous as the "fans" desired. One of them frankly shrank from the combat, whereupon William Bird, recalling the oft-repeated line of Villon, "Mais où sont les neiges d'antan?" (Where are the snows of yesteryear?) sadly murmured, "Mais où sont les nègres d'antan?"

Yet boxing was not adventurous enough, was not bloody enough. Hemingway discovered the bull fight. That was a man's sport. Down to Spain he went with various companions. He was, like Henri Montherlant, a devotee of the bull fights. He was more than a devotee. He was a high priest. Just as he had put on the gloves himself, so he fought the bulls himself. Nor was it sham fighting. He faced really dangerous animals, and he acquired dexterity in manipulating the red cloak. But one bull was too much for him, and he was placed hors de combat.

We watched his career with increasing interest. His short stories were, in their way, fine and original. Their subjects were sometimes gruesome, but he obtained his effects. Then he wrote "The Sun Also Rises"—or, as it is called in England "Fiesta."

His Sun rose. It was a terrible story—if story it could be called —of the most squalid side of Montparnasse, with a little Spanish bull fighting thrown in. Everybody recognised the characters. I knew them and could set down their names here. But to what purpose? They veritably existed if you will, but in the ultimate sense they never existed. None of them are representative of humanity. They have no emotions. They are promiscuous and unashamed. If the girl leaves her lover for a momentary caprice, the lover merely looks bored and says "Let's have another drink." This may be literally true of a few Montparnassians, but in any human sense it is blatantly untrue. I doubt even whether these particular persons of the Quarter were so absolutely devoid of ordinary feelings. Certainly, outside these special haunts, there are no such characters.

One might have supposed that the men and women thus pilloried would be angry. One of them at least was flattered. "I am the Jew in Hemingway's book," he told me. "I don't mind who knows it. At least I am made to knock out the other man. He was a poor fish. As for the girl, she was better than Hemingway described her. Still, he makes *me* of real flesh and blood, and I don't mind."

The other heroes of the adventure disappeared from Paris. I saw one of them later—a dismal bedraggled figure, sunk to still lower depths of degradation, and I was saddened.

Chapter IX

A QUARTER THAT TRIES

For a long time I sought a phrase that would fit Montparnasse. It was at last supplied to me by a charming little American girl to whom I was introduced. She refused to consider anybody who lived in Montparnasse as grown-up. She persisted, in spite of the visible appearances of my mature age, in the supposition that I must still be groping for something to do.

Therefore, treating me as belonging to her own generation, ignoring my avoirdupois, my Napoleonic beard, my sad superiority of seniority, she began to question me.

"What are you trying to do?" she cried.

"Oh, nothing in particular," I replied.

"Are you trying to paint?"

"No, I am not trying to paint."

"Are you trying to sculpt?"

"No, I am not trying to sculpt."

"Then of course you must be trying to write."

I pictured the long line of books bearing my name on my shelves. I rapidly estimated how many thousands of articles I had produced for magazines and newspapers. It struck me as comic that I should be asked gushingly if I were trying to write. So I answered that I had long ago given up trying, and had reconciled myself to my limitations. Yet that word "trying" is especially applicable to Montparnasse. Boys and girls, men and women, the inhabitants of Montparnasse are trying to write, trying to paint, trying to sculpt—but in the trying some of them incidentally appear to have a gay time.

There is much that is wrong with Montparnasse, but let us dwell on what is right. What is chiefly right is that the exuberant juveniles and their whiskered elders alike are trying to conceive and to execute worthy things. Often they fail. Most of them perhaps fail. But they persevere. They go on year after year, generation after generation, trying. They drift into undesirable paths, they make no progress, they fritter away their time. But somehow they continue to try. At least they never give up the desire to try. They try to try. When they are saddened by the passage of unfruitful time, when they have watched the seven lean kine succeed each other, when

they have begun to have doubts of themselves and of their art, they do not quite despair: they try to hope that they will again try to try.

Gushing girl of Montparnasse who flattered me by putting me in the category of triers, I thank thee for that word! Montparnasse is the Quarter that Tries.

It is so much else. It is invaded by idlers and sight-seers, so that the artists are beginning to move farther out. It is filled with foolish nocturnal revellers. But still, for all its crowded cafés, its noisy bars, its red and white sky-signs at night, it is a place in which attempts are made to accomplish something personal, something original, something great in the arts.

I have long looked down on that curious swarming hive of bad and good. I suppose that every visitor to Paris with pretensions to authorship—and who has not such pretensions in these days of universal education?—has written his or her piece about the Quarter. The true Latin Quarter is much nearer the river; there once I made my abode, and for it I have a particular tenderness. But, by extension, the district on the Left Bank, from the Luxembourg Gardens to the Lion de Belfort, is commonly called the Latin Quarter. Much better would it be were it frankly called the Anglo-Saxon Quarter, or the Scandinavian Quarter, or the Slav Quarter.

In the proliferation of prose on the subject of Montparnasse a surprising amount of nonsense has been offered to the public. I, who have seen many generations of Montparnasse artists and writers come and go—a generation in this sense lasts about two years—may be permitted to set down my impressions of this mad bad glad sad place, where there is, in all the cafés and in all the studios, much stirring and striving. Whether the efforts are crowned with success is another matter, but the keyword of the Quarter is Try.

Once the center of literary and artistic life was at Montmartre. Montmartre has changed. Even the old-world village on the topmost heights has been invaded by pleasure-seekers. Montmartre is becoming a memory—when it is not a glaring blaring nocturnal inferno. Some day I will have much to say about Montmartre as I knew it, but for the present I confine myself to Montparnasse. In one of my books, In And About Paris, I described Montparnasse as the Crossways of the World. That is a fair description of that stretch of sidewalk between the Gare Montparnasse and the Boulevard Saint-Michel, around which live and move, and have their sometimes riotous being, representatives of every country, and members of every school

of artistic expression. To it come visitors from the four corners of the earth. There is no language that is not spoken in this horizontal Tower of Babel. This motley throng is chiefly composed of writers, of painters, of sculptors, of models, French and foreign, besides the usual hangers-on of the army of Art. At the Closerie des Lilas you will mostly find Poles. At the Rotonde you will find Italians, Spaniards, and Balkanics—with a sprinkling of French. At the Dôme there are Scandinavians, British, and Americans. At the Coupole, a great Munich café which takes its name from the imaginary café of my fantastic novel, Mr. Paname, you will find Germans and Russians. There are plenty of other cafés, but these are the larger ones.

It was not always so. Montparnasse was, not many years ago, a quiet suburb, in which the artists lived almost a village life. When I first knew the Rotonde, for example, it was a tiny low ceilinged room in which poor folk gathered to while away idle hours. There was hardly space for two score of us. We played chess, we smoked, we sketched, we talked. We were ambitious and confident in our future, but in the meantime our pockets were empty, and we would linger over our little horseshoe-shaped rolls, and our black coffee, and speak comfortingly to each other out of the thick clouds of tobacco.

One regrets its transformation—quite unreasonably—as one always regrets the past.

There we related anecdotes of Whistler who lived close by in the rue Notre-Dame-des-Champs. Perhaps the favourite was that which represented him as asking an amazing price—for the epoch—from a merchant. When the merchant protested he answered, "It is my posthumous price." That was somehow enheartening. There was too his reply when he was asked how long he had taken to paint a portrait: "All my life."

Alexander Harrison, an old American painter whom I still see at the Closerie des Lilas, (he was once famous) knew Whistler well. He said, "I never knew a man of more sincere and generous impulse in ordinary human relations. Wit, pathos, gentleness, affection, audacity, acridity, tenacity, were in turn brought instantly to the sensitive surface by rough contact."

That is the verdict of those who remember him in Paris. In spite of his biting jests he was genuinely kind.

A lady remarked that the two names sacred in the history of art were Whistler and Velasquez. "True, dear lady," murmured Whistler, "but why drag in Velasquez?"

Which reminds me of the superb d'Annunzio, whom I saw

when he lived in France. A letter was addressed with only the words: "To Italy's Greatest Poet." It was delivered to him but he declined to receive it. He was not Italy's Greatest Poet: he was the World's Greatest Poet!

Similarly a little story was told me of an English sculptor: I do not believe it, for I have always found him a modest fellow. Still, it is too good to omit. Nevinson, the painter, called him the greatest living sculptor. He was offended—so I was informed—because there was something malicious and restrictive in the description!

I can vouch for the accuracy of the following example of megalomania, because it occurred in conversation with myself. A wealthy magnate was telling me of his journey to Germany. "At Cologne," he said, "a German asked to see me. I sent word that I was too busy. Presently my valet came back and said that the German insisted. I again refused. Once more the valet returned, saying he could not get rid of the man. I told him to ascertain precisely why the visitor was so importunate. Again the valet came back. 'It is because he thinks you are the greatest man in the world.'"

Thereupon the magnate turned to me and uttered in all sincerity this perfectly incredible sentence: "Don't you think that the reply was a little too flattering, that the German was a trifle obsequious, that he was exaggerating a little?"

It was at one moment the fashion to "exaggerate a little." Thus one novelist in the Quarter assured me solemnly that since the death of Joseph Conrad he was the only true stylist left in English letters.

Another acquaintance of the Quarter boasted that he was the Wickedest Man in the World. He was versed in the black arts, and there was no vice which he had not practised. A lady who had married several millionaires assured me without a suspicion of humour that she was the Most Dangerous Woman in Europe or America.

For the mode was to pretend to purple sins as well as to genius. One day a man said to me: "I strongly resemble Goethe physically as well as mentally, do I not?" Another day the same man remarked casually to me: "Some day I will write the truth about myself: Casanova had not half as many or as astonishing love affairs as I have had."

Painters too were vain. They had to persuade themselves that they were better than their predecessors. Otherwise why should they paint at all? That is the feeling behind much modern art. If one cannot beat Rembrandt on his own ground, then

choose another. Rembrandt was good, in his way; but we have become tired of that way. We will invent something new. Better to reign in Cubism than serve in Classicism! Thus one of the painters—who did poor but queer work—explained to me: "I will not say anything against Raphael, but he does not satisfy our needs. Now my pictures . . . "

Who shall say what is Art? John Storrs, a talented American sculptor who was a friend of mine, began to take pieces of metal, and to place them together in geometrical combinations, so that they looked like miniature and highly polished skyscrapers. These experiments only showed one aspect of his craftsmanship: his more orthodox statues were recognised to be admirable. But, sending some specimens of Cubistic sculpture in steel to America, he found them stopped by the Customs authorities.

"They swore that I was importing parts of an infernal machine," he told me. "They went through all the catalogue of machinery they could find. They read up all the text-books in engineering. They called in experts. They were nonplussed.

"But when I informed them that these things were Art, they laughed at me. It was not until I had brought the Curator of the Museum, who looked at them doubtfully but finally decided that perhaps I was speaking the truth and was not an anarchist, that they agreed to release them."

The same trouble arose when they were brought back to France. The excise man was puzzled. He could not put a value on the pieces. Certainly he supposed them to be parts of machinery. Yet he was more quickly persuaded that they were Art. In that case, however, a heavy duty should be put upon them. Storrs was exasperated and tired of the discussion. So he cried: "Then I abandon them. Take them. Keep them. I make you a present of them."

Thereupon the excise man grew alarmed. He ran after Storrs. "Here is your sculpture. It's worth nothing. You can have it." Storrs passed on disdainfully. The man pursued him, thrust the articles into his hands, glad to be relieved of them!

Who shall say?

It was in the cafés of the Quarter that the genial giant Guillaume Apollinaire, who did much to impose genuine art on the public, but who also imagined uproarious jokes which were taken seriously, was a notable figure fifteen years ago. He foisted absurdities on the public. It was always said in the Quarter that the Douanier Rousseau, a Sunday afternoon painter (who by the way was an excise man) was "made" in this manner. He was one of Apollinaire's jokes. It may be that

Apollinaire on this occasion joked better than he supposed, for the naïve pictures of Rousseau have real qualities.

Again Roland Dorgelès, the writer, carried out the farce of attaching a paint-brush to the tail of a donkey, of letting it swish colours on a canvas, and of labelling the result "Sunset on the Adriatic." The picture was hung in the Salon and was admired by the critics.

Who shall say?

Anyhow the Quarter, with its false theories and its farces, its earnestness and its laboriousness, its pretentiousness and its accomplishments, its stirrings and strivings, its comedies and tragedies, is the most interesting place I know. I regret its so-called "Americanization," which apparently means for certain people a release of inhibitions, and its noisiness, its drinking, its unpleasant behaviour. I regret the multiplication of ill-frequented barrooms, and equivocal night-haunts, I regret the vaunted and flaunted perversions. I regret much that is modern. But, even now, the Bohemianism of Montparnasse is brave and sometimes pathetic. Do not let us be misled by surface appearances. There are wasters of time and of talent; there are careless and worthless onlookers; but there are also men and women who are prepared to make every sacrifice for Art, who do not dissipate their days or fritter away their nights, who work unfalteringly and who—try.

Montparnasse, as I once wrote, is at once iniquitous and virtuous, morbid and healthy, wise and foolish, and in it men and women degenerate or flourish. Bad and good qualities alike expand luxuriantly in this soil.

Political refugees as well as writers and artists used to frequent the Quarter. Thus there were Trotsky and Lenin, whose seats in the café old residents will point out, and lately I saw much of Unamuno in Montparnasse. For the moment I propose to speak only of a few of the painters who are or have been in my time associated with the district.

There was, for example, Picasso, who frequented the cafés of the Quarter in his blue period, when he was painting gitanas and monkeys and acrobats. Then followed the rose period. There was a period of negro masks. Finally Cubism arrived and the younger men worshipped Picasso as a god.

There was a good deal of irony and even of mystification in Picasso's work—of which Rolf de Maré once showed me the best collection at Paris. "Can you explain to me, Master, why you do not always draw the feet in your paintings?" Picasso

responded gravely: "Because there are no feet in nature." "How true!" murmured the young disciple.

Or again: "When one does not know how to draw, what should one do?" "One should go to school, Master." "No, you are wrong. You should found a school."

Picasso, of course, could draw supremely well. But in the end he declined to copy. "Art is not the truth. Art is a sublime lie. I do not understand the importance given by artists to the necessity of research. You do not find anything by research. A man who keeps his eyes fixed on the ground in the hope of coming upon a diamond is foolish. Those who discover things do not search for them." Picasso made a sketch of packing-cases of various sizes on the banks of the Seine. What should he call it? He had an inspiration. He entitled it "Portrait of my Father." Thus began the craze for eccentric portraits composed of fiddles, cube-sugar, and newspapers.

Derain was another idol of *la jeunesse*. He lived in the rue Bonaparte opposite the Ecole des Beaux Arts, and he was fond of playing various musical instruments. His portraits were designed with a tender fantasy, and his still-lifes were freely constructed with a surprising fancy. Derain is a big man, tall and broad, with a highly coloured face, lit up by malicious eyes. Yet he is timid. I do not know why, of recent years, he has failed to exercise his former influence. He is never dull, but though he is lively his work is serious. Of him it may be properly said that he mixes his paint with brains.

Who of the Quarter does not recall Modigliani? Who does not speak of his sad life? It was Modigliani who used to spread out, against the trees, by the walls of the houses, on the benches, some of his canvasses for his friends to see—though it was an excellent Spanish painter whom I knew well, Ortiz de Zarate, who persuaded the proprietor of the Café du Petit Napolitain to hang his pictures in the public room—an example which was soon followed in the cafés of the Quarter. Nina Hamnet, an English painter from whom I learnt a score of old chanties, told me that she bought from Modigliani a picture for five francs. He was good-looking, with dark eyes and curly hair; he wore corduroy trousers and a knitted jersey. Wretchedly poor, he had an unhappy love affair and took to drink. He also used ether. There are many disappointed painters who resort to these noxious habits. He fell ill and was taken to hospital. One day—the story is told with awe—the cat jumped out of the window in Modigliani's *atelier*, and at the same moment Modigliani died in hospital. His girl wife went back

to her parents. She was left alone in a room on the sixth floor. Obsessed by the death of Modigliani, and by the strange portent of the cat, she too jumped from the window. She was found by workmen who took her back to the old *atelier* where she soon expired. At the funeral of Modigliani at Père-Lachiase, the whole of Montparnasse followed the coffin of the unfortunate artist. It is to be observed that immediately the news of his death was known the price of his paintings was trebled.

Another legend of the art schools and cafés is that of Maurice Utrillo. Francic Carco, the novelist, whose monograph on Utrillo is remarkable, told me of him when we used to meet chez Raoul by the Opéra-Comique. Utrillo properly belongs to Montmartre, and some of the café proprietors there kept tubes of colour, brushes, pencils, and canvasses, so that indigent artists might pay for their drinks by presenting the establishment with sketches. His mother, Suzanne Valadon, frequented Montparnasse. So too did Utrillo. He was an habitué of the inns. He painted and drank, drank and painted. His vices developed and it was necessary to sequestrate him. Yet it was in this terrible period that he did the work that will last longest. His later production is less inspired, is far too meticulous, resembles picture post-cards. Today high prices are paid for canvasses that are nothing like so good as those which he sold for a drink or two. How wonderful are the pictures of tortuous old streets, low huddled houses, dilapidated signs, ramshackle roofs! He has caught the desolate atmosphere, the bleak loneliness, of the decaying quarters with their bare unhappy trees, their mouldering walls, their morbid suggestion of misery. His art came out of the torture of his soul.

Carco recently figured in a curious law suit. Charles Camoin many years ago was displeased with some of his paintings. He cut up his canvasses and threw them in the dustbin. In the early morning came the rag-pickers. They found the slashed pictures, pieced them together, and they were purchased by a dealer. Thus they fell into the hands of Carco, who subsequently sold his collection. Thereupon Camoin sued him. He contended that he had a right to destroy his own works, and that nobody had a right to trade in works of which he was ashamed. There were plenty of arguments to be urged on both sides, but finally the tribunal agreed with the artist and awarded damages to Camoin.

Maurice de Vlaminck who is often seen in the Quarter had a somewhat different complaint. The trade in false Vlamincks after the war was enormous. The artist was prejudiced in many

ways. First, the mere multiplication of his work diminished its value. Second, the falsification of his work damaged his reputation. So one day we were all agog when we learnt that he had entered a picture gallery and had lacerated the false pictures signed in his name. Nor was this the only case. False Utrillos pullulated. Othon Friesz, a leader of Paris art, discovered in two picture galleries of the Left Bank imitations of his characteristic style. At the Dôme he won the sympathy of everybody when he announced his intention of taking legal proceedings.

It must not however be supposed that all these false paintings have no justification whatever. In a certain case I have reason to know that the artist had quarrelled with his mistress, who left him carrying off a score of canvasses which were unfinished and had been put aside. They were touched up by a fellow artist and were readily accepted by the picture-dealers.

Sometimes there are lively scenes on the terraces of the Montparnasse cafés. There is an art critic named Marcel Hiver, who violently attacked many of the modern men. He was not content with speaking of their paintings. He assailed their language, which is not always choice, and their morals, which are not always such as are approved by polite society. I forget what he had said about Kisling, but on a certain evening there was an angry dispute which was followed by a bout of fisticuffs. We sat at the café late that night, some of us taking the side of the critic, and some of us taking the side of the painter. While it lasted the little review CAP (Criticism, Art, Philosophy) was a fighting organ, and its protest against the excessive commercialisation of art was amply justified. Hiver had been a friend of mine since far-off Latin Quarter days, but though I agreed with his main purpose, it was impossible to approve of his vicious vituperation.

There were also many men who evolved, and left Montparnasse for more fashionable districts. They must sometimes regret Bohemia. Thus there was Van Dongen, who was poor enough in the Quarter, but who was taken up by society, became rich, and eventually quitted us to inhabit a house near the Bois, where his midnight parties, attended by fashionable throngs, became exciting social events.

Foujita was another painter who left us when his exquisite Japanese drawings attained a great vogue. But he came back to build a house and studio near the Parc Montsouris and to begin the nucleus of a new artists' colony. Van Dongen was a blond bearded Dutchman: Foujita was a lank-haired Japanese

with gold-rimmed glasses. He brought an exotic note to the Quarter, and a whole school of Foujitas, their black hair carefully brushed smooth over their foreheads to their eyes, made their appearance.

Henri Matisse deserted Montparnasse years ago, but his memory is kept green. He discovered that one method of maintaining his prices was to produce little. Many artists have cheapened their production by giving the dealers all they demand. I believe there are stowed away somewhere in Paris no fewer than eight hundred Renoirs. To throw them together into the market would bring down their value. Therefore the canvasses are carefully concealed. . . . Matisse is not going to make the same mistake. His pictures are relatively scarce . . . Before the war he had an art school in Paris and his pupils came from England and from America. Matisse insisted that they should try to discover their own personality. Instead, they tried to paint Matisses. So in disgust he closed his school. Then he went to Nice to live simply in spite of his fame. With his nicely trimmed beard and spectacles, he looks rather like a banker than an artist.

Curiously, Matisse, who has departed so far from the teaching of the 'Nineties, had for masters Bouguereau and Gustave Moreau. Bouguereau knew his business but his name is a synonym in Paris for all that is, in the worst sense, Academic. He did not stay long with Bouguereau. Afterwards he went to the Ecole des Beaux Arts and copied the old Greek sculptures. There he met Gustave Moreau whose beautiful mythological women drip with light and colour but are too meticulously ornamented and too literary. However, Moreau influenced a large number of the modern men. Matisse worked from his models but abandoned altogether his style. Nevertheless he was diligent and copied the Chardines, the Poussins, the Raphaels, the Fragonards, in the Louvre. Some of these copies were bought by the French Government and sent to provincial museums. Then he studied the Cézannes in Durand-Ruel's shop.

In French the phrase "violon d'Ingres" indicates the pet hobby we all cultivate. Ingres in the interval of painting played the violin. So does Matisse.

Frank Harris told me of the most wonderful stories I have ever heard. It was told to him by Matisse; but Harris, a marvellous raconteur, gave it a vivid life. It was of Renoir. For twenty years Renoir was a prey to rheumatism. His fingers were distorted. The brush he held between thumb and fore-

finger, the palm of his hand being cut and painful. His back too was in a sad state and had perpetually to be treated. To work he had to be placed in his chair which was moved up and down. So to the end he worked, with his poor twisted hand, painting in pain sweet pictures of young girls on banks of flowers. I shall never forget the manner in which Harris repeated Renoir's reply to Matisse who expostulated with him.

"Why do any more, Master? Why torture yourself?"

To which Renoir replied: "The pain passes but the beauty remains."

Somewhere I believe Harris has told this story in print, but assuredly he has not written it better than he spoke it.

Ambroise Vollard, one of the first collectors of the modern men, beginning with Cézanne and including Renoir and Degas, has many good anecdotes of Cézanne. One afternoon he was with him in the shop in the rue Laffitte. There entered a man who examined, one by one, the pictures. He spent several hours in the place without speaking a word. Finally Vollard asked him if he was interested in anything. "Oh, no," he replied, "I think painting is stupid. I only entered because it was raining."

It is for similar reasons that many people visit the studios of Montparnasse. The artists are always ready to invite strangers. "Come round to my studio," Zadkine would say. "You'll understand better after I have explained to you my sculpture." He was one of the first to affect what has been called negro art. A sharp little fellow, usually wearing a startling check suit, he spoke good English and obtained many commissions in England.

Gilbert White, the American painter, worked in the quiet district of the Plaine Monceau, but he came to Montparnasse to play. For some reason which I have never been able to divine, he used to pretend that he and I resembled each other. He would call himself in Parisian receptions when I was present Sisley White and insist on addressing me as Gilbert Huddleston. "Now I am beside myself," he would remark as we sat down together. He was a member of a gastronomic club which I founded, and I well remember one evening, when we had dined in a little homely but excellent restaurant of Les Halles. Unable to find a taxicab in these deserted regions, we gave the driver of a cabbage-cart forty francs to allow us to race his horses to the Boulevards. Our arrival in this great high chariot at full speed at the Place de l'Opéra created a sensation.

Incidentally, we gave this dining club the name of The

Trough. One day we received from Philadelphia a request from a group of men who wished to found a similar club. Could they call it, after us, The Trough? We indignantly refused permission, but, softening the blow, assured them that we would raise no objection if they called themselves The Swill-Pail.

White is perhaps the wittiest man I have known. He is bubbling with fun. Once he was at a meeting which was held in honour of a Captain White who had been a liaison officer during the war. White too was a captain in the war. There was some confusion. He was approached and asked if he was Captain White. "Certainly," he assured the inquirer. "Then it is your turn to speak." He made an excruciatingly comic speech, the keynote of which was that if liaison officers had been needed during the war, they were no longer needed, though there were more liaisons than ever. Meanwhile the authentic Captain White, the guest of the evening, sat silent, and his prepared speech remained unuttered.

He has decorated many Government buildings in the United States, and is now working on a War Memorial for Oklahoma. Tall, genial, with long hair, and a twinkle in his eye, he "looks the part" of a painter, as the late Mr. Munsey once told me I "looked the part" of a writer. Sic transit gloria Munsey.

His observations on the changes he has seen in Paris art circles are sound: "When I was a student in Paris, we lived in the Latin Quarter and never crossed the river. In those days it took two hours to reach the Etoile, and we had too much work to spend so much time on travelling. But then our ideas were entirely different. We considered that an exhibition was the crowning effort of a man's work, the result of years of study and labor. Now, young painters begin by gathering up a sufficient number of indifferent canvasses to give an exhibition. The basic training is lacking. Besides, everybody is analysing, with the result that painters are self-conscious. What they produce is affected, and honestly done work is rare. Few modern painters measure up to the despised artists of the Eighteenth Century. They knew anatomy, they understood how to work, even if they did choose banal subjects, whereas the artists of today have neither the inspiration nor the technique."

There were among the models of the Quarter a few who were famous. There was Ayesha, a beautiful mulatto, and Kiki, extraordinarily vivacious, who herself turned to painting and produced some quaint canvasses . . .

One story of a model deserves to become a classic. It is, I believe, strictly true. An official war-painter was, according to

army discipline, put under the orders of a Colonel. The Colonel did not usually interfere with his choice of subjects; and the two men got along fairly well. But at last the Colonel discovered a painting of a girl in the quarters of the artist. He was very fussy about it—asked what it had to do with the artist's job of making a pictorial record of the war. Without thinking, and with a comic intention, the artist replied, "Oh, don't you know, this is a portrait of the spy that has been prowling around." Instead of letting the matter drop, the Colonel became inquisitive, and the unfortunate painter was led from step to step into constructing a rocambolesque narrative of the supposed spy. He felt he could not retreat. But the consequences were unfortunate. A search was made; and the lady was found to be occupying the rooms of the painter. Since he had himself foolishly described her as a spy in a jocular explanation of the picture, she was arrested and he was examined by higher officers. For himself, there was no particular difficulty. He made a clean breast of his relations with the lady, for whose patriotism he could vouch, gave the simple and true reason of her presence, stated precisely why, in his wish to put off the fussy Colonel, he had humorously invented a yarn. His superiors laughed and admonished him mildly. But as for the lady—it took several months to establish her innocence of the charges made against her; for once an accusation is brought in war time it is hard to destroy it. In the meantime she was kept in captivity.

The chief attraction of Montparnasse in spite of its changes is that there one feels surrounded by young life, with genuine aspirations, and although much that is done is silly, and mistakes are innumerable, yet, in spite of the dealers, and the snobs, and the visitors, and the foolish short-cuts, and the deliberate fakers, and the noxious night-haunts, something big may veritably emerge from this welter of cafés and studios and academies in which artists from many lands meet to understand each other, to stimulate each other, and to—"try."

Chapter X

ANATOLE FRANCE AND HIS BOSWELLS

VOLTAIRE looked down ironically from his pedestal when they buried Anatole France with a wealth of incredibly poor oratory and martial music. The spectacle on the Quai Malaquais was painful to me, though perhaps France would have found it amusing. The two things that he detested most in life were official eloquence and military pomp; yet when he died his friends permitted his memory to be insulted by the most grotesque ceremony I have seen in Paris. One can understand that the Government, at the head of which was Herriot, should have thought fit to arrange this public ceremony as a preliminary to the conveyance of his remains to the Panthéon; and that the Académie Française, the Société des Gens de Lettres, the Confédération Générale du Travail, the Socialist Party, and other unimaginative associations should be ignorant of the teachings and the wishes of the man they came to dishonour, is comprehensible. But was there nobody among his friends who was strong enough to resist those who saw in his death an occasion for a little self-glorification?

It was a somber day in October 1924 when I saw, with tears in my eyes, the catafalque draped in violet cloth, the platforms, the flags, the festoons from tree to tree, the soldiers, the tall hats and the bicornes of Parliamentarians and Academicians. The Seine flowed sluggishly on by the old Palace of the Institut de France, reflecting a rusty sky. The crowd came from every point, crossing the frequent bridges, converging to the array of banners. A tug-boat trailing a long file of barges sent up a shrill cry. Taxi-cabs hooted. Officers shouted commands to their troops. All this was nauseating for those acquainted with Anatole France's tastes and opinions: but surely he would have loved to have seen the searchers for books who, in spite of the preparations, continued to dip into the boxes which remained open on the quays. Heedless of the commotion they turned the pages of the volumes . . . Then came the carriage on which was brought the coffin. The photographers rushed forward. The sky began to lighten as the pundits of the Republic took their reserved places.

Ministers and Generals descended from automobiles. There was Caillaux, who had frequented France, his bare bald head

thrown back proudly. There was General Gouraud, the Military Governor of Paris, his armless sleeve tucked into his pocket. Would they salute each other? Caillaux was just emerging from the cloud which had long enwrapped him. There was a pause. Then the politician and the soldier, the eyes of the crowd upon them, shook hands. The crowd pointed out the President of the Senate, the President of the Chamber, the President of the Council of Ministers. M. Herriot supported Madame France on his arm. A band played plaintive airs. Girls threw flowers before the coffin. Gabriel Hanotaux, the historian, in green embroidered uniform, representing the Académie Française, rose with a sheaf of papers in his hand. He read his little discourse. After him came other orators. Loud speakers carried their voices afar . . . Voltaire looked down from his statue with a sad ironic smile.

Behind this elaborate machinery for the ostentatious display of human vanity, was the little bookshop in which Anatole France was born. Jacques Anatole Thibault was the son of François-Noël Thibault who carried on business on the Quai Malaquais; and there on April 16, 1844, his illustrious son saw the light. Subsequently the bookseller moved to No. 9, Quai Voltaire. Anatole was sent as a boy to the Collège Stanislas. He wandered about the city, which he learnt to love chiefly for its artistic treasures and for its splendid though sometimes tattered pages of the past. He has himself set down his reminiscences in Le Livre de Mon Ami, Pierre Nozière, Le Petit Pierre, and La Vie En Fleur.

He began to write when he was a young man—his first published work was a monograph on Alfred de Vigny in 1868. His career was comparatively uneventful and he went from success to success. From the beginning his style was as nearly perfect as may well be, and he was admitted by critics and by popular acclaim to the foremost place among the writers of our time. In December 1896 he was elected to the Académie Française but he soon ceased to attend its meetings. When he was already old and ailing he married his gouvernante —in 1920. In 1921 he was awarded the Nobel Prize.

France had contracted an earlier marriage in the early 'Eighties and he had one daughter. This marriage was unhappy, and was soon dissolved. The first marriage of the daughter, Suzanne, was also unhappy, but after her divorce Suzanne married the grandson of Ernest Renan, Michel Psichari, who was killed in the Great War. Of his grandson, Jean Psichari, Anatole France was very fond.

My own acquaintance with Anatole France was sufficient to give me a strong impression of his personality. He was simple and kindly, in manner and appearance; his voice was soft yet deep. He spoke slowly, wisely, and wittily. With his ecclesiastical hands, he described wide gestures. He was calm and composed, even nonchalant, and could hardly be aroused to passion. Yet there was usually a trace of *tristesse* in the expression of his countenance. His eyes were gentle, but in them was a glint of malice and amusement. Irony lurked about his lips. He struck me as tall, though this I believe to be not the case. His long wrinkled brownish face was further lengthened by a carefully trimmed beard. On his head he wore a round red skull-cap. At home in the Villa Saïd (at the entrance of the Bois de Boulogne) he often remained in his dressing-gown, his feet encased in black felt slippers. He had collected a wealth of books and pictures and bibelots, which he was fond of showing to his visitors.

During the war he acquired a little property, La Béchellerie, near Tours, where he often retired, and it was there that he died.

It may be that the most important influence in Anatole France's life was that of Madame Arman de Caillavet. She, the mother of Robert de Flers' collaborator, was France's Ægeria. She urged him to work when he would have preferred to idle. Indeed she is said to have written many pages attributed to him. Doubtless she tyrannised him occasionally, and he tried to escape from her. But for many years, she was his guardian angel—arranging his tasks, and "managing" him, and showing him up to the best advantage in the receptions which she held in her salon of the Avenue Hoche.

In France there is a strong tradition of the literary salon. It was the literary salons which gave a meeting-place to the *philosophes* of the Eighteenth Century who were largely responsible for the Revolution. Madame de Caillavet maintained the tradition. She was an admirable woman and her husband was a complacent man. France quarrelled incessantly with M. de Caillavet, but they were good-natured quarrels, and he always had his place at the table of Madame. Brousson has related some of the conversations at the déjeuners in the Avenue Hoche—doubtless exaggerated, doubtless, in part at least, apocryphal. But I recommend them to the reader, for they give the flavour of these meetings. One can only smile at such conversations as the following:

Monsieur: "I have read your article in L'Action. Then you

desert L'Humanité (the journal of the Socialists and afterwards of the Communists). Why? You do not like L'Humanité because it has no money. I understood nothing of your article this morning."

France: "That does not astonish me. It is not for you that I wrote it."

Monsieur: "Good. I am too stupid, am I not, to understand your masterpieces? Well, when one finds that somebody is only a booby one does not come to lunch with him every day for twenty years."

France: "That is what I have told myself every morning for twenty years."

Madame: "Messieurs, I pray you, spare me your political quarrels. Reserve them for the smoke room. Do not forget that there is a woman here."

France: "How could I forget it, Madame?"

Monsieur: "Did you read the article in the Gaulois (the aristocratic journal)? That was well done!"

France: "Well done? . . . "

Madame: "Take care, Messieurs, you are again talking politics."

Monsieur: "In any case the article is by a patriot, a good Frenchman."

France: "Yes, but these good Frenchmen can never write in French."

So it went on. The conversation turned upon the artistic collection of Dr. P. Madame praised his taste.

Monsieur: "Taste, Madame? And what is taste? When one is rich one has always taste. There are plenty of people who possess it for you. You have only to address yourself to the antiquarians, the merchants, who have professional taste. Myself, I have taste . . . "

France: "There are those who have taste but have no tact, for one can have one without the other. Taste is the sentiment of beauty. Tact is the sentiment of propriety."

Monsieur: "It is understood, Monsieur France. You have taste. You have tact. You have one as much as the other. And you, Madame? Have you taste?"

Madame: (regarding her husband) "Taste, my friend—it is true I have not always had taste; but (regarding Anatole France) thanks be to God I have acquired it."

Madame de Caillavet not only followed the literary stream but tried to direct it. Statesmen, savants, poets, novelists, from Emile Ollivier to Georges Clemenceau, from Ferrero, the his-

torian, to Jean Jaurès, the Socialist, from Ernest Renan to Marcel Proust, were to be seen in her home, but she gave the warmest welcome to the younger aspirants. Charming letters by Charles Maurras testify to the intelligent sympathy she manifested in promising authors. He, the Royalist, was at the opposite pole from Anatole France, but she encouraged him too.

Book after book she suggested to the creator of Monsieur Bergeret, and the Abbé Coignard, and the unforgettable Crainquebille. Notably she persuaded him to write Le Lys Rouge, which has a place apart from his other work. She saw the success of society novels, and she wished to prove that Anatole France was capable of relating a story which was cast in the refined world. "But I know nothing of it," he protested: "I should only write nonsense and I would be mocked."

Finally he consented, but she insisted that one of the principal scenes should be at the Opéra.

"At the Opéra?" cried Anatole France, "but, Madame, I have never put my foot in that place!"

"And the Thebaid, Monsieur," returned his friend, "have you frequented the Thebaid to any extent? Yet the scenes of 'Thaïs' which you laid there have been very successful. And the house of Daphne at Corinth, do you know it well?"

Jeanne Maurice Pouquet, the daughter-in-law of Madame de Caillavet, has compared the relations of Anatole France and Madame de Caillavet to those of Madame Récamier and Chateaubriand. The mistress of the house was truly accomplished, and she presided with authority over the drawing-room, which played as prominent a part in the life of Paris as those of the Duchesse de Rohan, of Madame Juliette Adam, of Madame Aubernon, of Madame de Loynes. Anatole France was, of course, the chief ornament of the salon, and when he was absent the conversation invariably turned upon him. Thus, when he was travelling, Madame de Caillavet read aloud to the habitués of the salon a letter relating his movements.

"What a charming letter!" exclaimed a guest. "Ah! how well France always writes!"

"But," replied Madame de Caillavet, "that letter is not from him: it is from the valet de chambre who accompanies him."

She was not despotic. She remembered the methods of Madame Aubernon, who insisted that her guests should speak in turn, and rang a bell, as in a public meeting, to regulate the conversation. One day Renan, at table, tried to speak. Madame

Aubernon silenced him. He remained quiet until he was authorised to take his turn.

She smiled graciously. "We are waiting, M. Renan, to hear what you were about to say."

"Oh, Madame, it no longer matters—it is too late."

"No, no. I authorise you to speak."

"Well," said Renan in confusion, "it was simply to ask for some more peas."

It is strange to reflect that this woman, who surrounded Anatole France with a court, disliked him intensely when he was first presented to her by Jules Lemaître. She found him clumsy, stuttering, and bashful; but presently she recognised his superior talent, and she devoted her labour, her influence, her life, to the glory of the writer, before whom incense was, thereafter, perpetually burnt. Yet she did not neglect others: notably she induced France to write for the juvenile Marcel Proust a preface to Les Plaisirs et Les Jours. Pierre Loti was another illustrious frequenter of her salon.

Earlier writers had been associated with Madame de Caillavet. There was Alexandre Dumas *fils,* then at the height of his dramatic fame. Hippolyte Taine also knew her, and encouraged the young France, who was then writing literary criticisms for the Temps, and had published his Poêmes Dorés, his Noces Corinthiennes, and his delicious Crime de Sylvestre Bonnard. "There is nothing like poetry," said Taine, "to teach one to write good prose." Sylvestre Bonnard, Taine considered admirable; and he counselled the author to "remain what you are, and compensate us for so much contemporary talent which has gone astray, and under pretext of presenting us with the truth, causes us to be disgusted with life and with literature." George Sand was still alive and wrote pleasant letters to him.

Pierre Loti one day thanked Anatole France for an article upon him. France frankly stated that it was written by Madame. Jules Lemaître was annoyed by another article, which was eulogious but contained certain reservations. He said to France, "It is well written but it is not by you." Again France acknowledged that it was by Madame Arman. Still, one must not exaggerate. She contributed something to his work, but chiefly she kept him busy. She supplied him with material; but Anatole France is, of course, the veritable author of Anatole France's books. Maurras wrote of Madame, "She had a passion for France's fame." The delightful novelist the Comtesse de Martel (Gyp) wrote: "Most people who have

bowed before his talent would never have discovered it had it not been for Madame de Caillavet."

Stories about Anatole France are multitudinous. Nobody since Samuel Johnson has furnished so much material for a Boswell. His sayings are recorded in a dozen works which have appeared since his death. He could not speak without provoking an agitation of pencils on shirt-cuffs. He was followed everywhere—even into the most private places—by a corps of literary detectives. The Boswell of Dr. Johnson had exceptional veneration, but the Boswells of Anatole France are often malicious, or at least have a spice of humour.

Anatole France chose his familiars with peculiar indulgence. They were a motley crowd. There was the Bolshevik philosopher, Rappoport, looking like an incredibly hairy gnome—a strange creature of Russian origin, satirised in every cabaret for his legendary dirtiness (apparent, not real) and received in every salon for his raucous-voiced wit. There was the publisher Gaston Calmann. There was the physician, Dr. Couchoud, an erudite Biblical scholar. There was François Crucy, an able journalist; and Michel Corday, a popular novelist. There was Léopold Kahn; there was Pierre Mille; there were a few deputies; there were "horny-handed representatives of labour," that Anatole France, the sybarite, held in horror, but nevertheless flattered because he was supposed—and probably supposed himself—to entertain "advanced" opinions.

Then there floated in and out persons who became temporary enthusiasts. It was not easy to obtain access to France, but sometimes he yielded to the blandishments of insignificant worthless visitors.

One of his Boswells was a Madame Boloni, a Hungarian author, who wrote under the name of Sandor Kemeri. She came when Anatole France was still sorrowing for the death of his old friend Madame de Caillavet. She accompanied him and Couchoud to Italy, admired his books, his bibelots, his pictures and statues, some of the latter from the hands of Rodin —she admired everything, his head and his hands, admired intensely, admired profusely. She was given opportunities of describing the authentic France—temperamentally lazy though capable of the hardest work, contemplative though occasionally very active, loving old prints and old churches yet interested in modern men like Proust.

So we hear of France's meeting with Bjornston Bjornson, the white-maned lion of the North, in his hotel facing the Tuileries Gardens. Him I never knew, but his daughter,

Madame Georges Sautreau, a charming hostess with pale gold hair, used to receive me in her drawing-room on the Boulevard Flandrin, which was frequented by France himself, and in later years, after the war, by German diplomatists who were still ostracised. There I first met the Ambassador Von Hoesch, a sweet-tempered, soft-spoken, truly tactful man, who conducted himself admirably in those difficult days; and quickly won the friendship of Poincaré even in the period of the Ruhr occupation. There too was the aged Sir Thomas Barclay, one of the pioneers of the Entente Cordiale, an ardent worker for peace, a sincere gentleman, whose special friendship I enjoyed.

The reconciliation of the two giants Rodin and France, after a quarrel, is worth recording. They decided to forget the past; and Rodin was invited to lunch at the Villa Saïd. France did his best to honour the great sculptor, whose Aphrodite, which France thought was more beautiful than the Venus de Milo, was conspicuously in evidence. On the table was spread an altar cloth of Florentine lace. On it stood Bohemian glass, Louis XVI crystal, dishes in majolica, and a profusion of Parma violets. Rodin entered, a modern Michelangelo, robust, heavy, muscular, restless, irascible. At the sight of these treasures of Anatole France, this collection of beauty, he was deeply moved. The two old men moved towards each other and clasped hands in silent ecstasy.

One anecdote which amused me immensely and throws a light on the morality of certain French newspapers I had from Pierre Mille. We were in the flat at Neuilly which Poultney Bigelow, the American diplomatist who had come into close contact with the German Kaiser, inhabited whenever he left his farm on the Hudson River to revisit Paris. Pierre Mille, novelist, historian, journalist—writing of everything and writing everything well—related how France used to contribute weekly articles to a newspaper. Always did he leave his task to the last minute, and a messenger boy would carry off the pages with the ink still wet upon them. That morning France had no subject. A delegation of Armenians was announced. They came to complain of their treatment by the Turks. When they had gone, France began to write a diatribe against Turkey. The printer's devil carried off the copy, and it was set up. Nobody in the office saw it until it appeared. Nobody considered it necessary to edit France.

But there was afterwards a terrible todo. The Editor was furious. "Did you not know," he asked France, "that we are

under financial obligations to the Turks? I do not know how we are to get out of this mess."

Some time later France met the Editor. "Did you arrange that affair of the Turkish article?" he asked.

"Oh, yes, and I owe you my warmest thanks."

"Thanks?" exclaimed France.

"Yes, thanks. Because you attacked them, the rascals have doubled their contribution."

France went with Jean Jaurès, patriarchally-bearded, erudite, beloved of the people, the greatest platform speaker of my time, to a public meeting in a little town of the Midi. When they alighted at the station the leader of the reception committee ignored France, but, approaching Jaurès, said: "If I am not mistaken, you are the citizen Jaurès."

"That is true glory," whispered Anatole France.

On the platform, the chairman, who could only remember the first name of France, announced him as Monsieur Anatole.

Jaurès in his turn whispered: "That is true popularity!"

It will be remembered that Jaurès was shot by a fanatic on the very eve of the war in a little café of the rue Montmartre, and that his assassination aroused indignation that the authorities could hardly quell: had they not promised that justice should be done, the mob might easily have got out of hand—with disastrous consequences.

Einstein, whose lecture at the Institut on Relativity was one of the memorable intellectual events of Paris (Paul Painlevé, the Minister and mathematician, attempted a rectification of the Einstein theory) was talking to François Crucy about France.

"His scepticism does not trouble you?" asked the journalist.

"He is sceptical intellectually," replied Einstein, "but not sentimentally." And that is perhaps the best word that has been spoken about France.

He was indulgent towards other authors. "You say they have no talent," he remarked, "but surely it requires great talent to sell their books if they have no talent."

When he was working at Les Dieux Ont Soif, he confessed that he could make no progress. "I am stuck," he complained. "Surely you are joking?" "Ah, no. I have arrived at a situation in which my hero becomes heroic: I feel I must be wrong."

Of a politician who could not impose his ideas on the public, he said: "His illusion is to believe that intelligent people lead imbeciles. It is the opposite that is true."

Another journalistic incident should be put in. M. de Caillavet had written at Toulon an article on the regatta. France was staying with him, and Caillavet asked him to add a few lines. Thereupon France wrote some literary phrases, about the sails under the sun, the gliding keels, the mirror-like sea, and so forth. A few days later the issue of the Figaro in which the article appeared reached them.

Caillavet: "Ah, you think you are a great writer."

France: "I do not say that."

Caillavet: "You are not a writer at all. Look at this Figaro. Every word I wrote is published. Every word you wrote has been cut out."

He was praising a young poet somewhat too extravagantly, as was his wont. "Master," said the young poet, "I cannot believe that you have done me the honour of reading my poem."

"What" exclaimed France. "I will give you a proof. Your best poem is on page 84."

"It is true," murmured the poet. "Forgive me for doubting. I thank you from the bottom of my heart."

"You cannot have read page 84," said an intimate of France.

"Of course not," admitted France. "It was a bow drawn at a venture. But a poet thinks any poem which anybody mentions is his best."

"But supposing page 84 had been blank?"

"In that case—though I should have been sorry for it—my reply would have passed for a biting epigram."

Paul Gsell, in his Matinées of the Villa Saïd, gives us the best examples of the conversation of Anatole France. There is a vulgar English expression—trying it on the dog—and France used to try on writers, artists, Spanish anarchists, Russian nihilists, and other visitors his apophthegms before he wrote them. Gsell well describes the Villa Saïd—in a tranquil impasse, planted with sycamores, off the Avenue du Bois de Boulogne, where the remaining lovers of horses ride every morning. The very door of the house was artistic: it was painted green; and the bell pull was a little Florentine head in bronze, while the letter box was fastened by antique medals.

In the vestibule were specimens of Persian faïence, blue, Green, and red, potteries of Rhodes, with dull gold reflections, archaic statuettes—a German Madonna, an Italian Lucretia: while along the stairway were ancient stained glass windows. Renaissance furniture at one period particularly appealed to France, and he would point out on his chimney piece a specimen of Renaissance sculpture. On his table were Tanagra images.

But France was always changing the décor. When he wrote Thaïs, there were around him Hellenic souvenirs, heads, torsos, and marble columns. When he wrote Le Lys Rouge, the predominant note was Italian. When he wrote Jeanne d'Arc, he was surrounded by tapestries of the Fifteenth Century. When he wrote of the Revolution, there were prints of the Eighteenth Century.

"I am not rich," said France, "and yet my collection is honourable. Collectors, like lovers, find that passion is a good substitute for wealth. In the boxes of the *bouquinistes,* in the dim recesses of obscure shops, unique pieces, which escape the millionaires, catch the eye of searchers whose purses are lean but who pursue and implore with phrenetic envy. Nevertheless to conquer women and chefs d'oeuvre, it is better to be both rich and passionate."

An English bookseller, Sims, of the rue de Seine, had a wonderful flair, and would bring old books to Anatole France. "He has two loves which are equally praiseworthy—good old authors and the generous wines of France. When he tells me that he has made an extraordinary discovery, I never know whether he is speaking of a dusty bottle or a rare incunabulum. Sometimes he comes clad in bizarre fashion, for he professes that the order in which we put on our clothes is purely conventional. He may first put on his coat, then his shirt, and then his vest. What does it matter, he asks, so long as they are all on? Do they not keep us warm?"

It was not always France who talked. He was a good listener. Nothing is more entertaining than the account given of the visits of would-be Academicians, paying the traditional call to obtain the votes of the Immortals. There was, for example, Edmond Haraucourt, whom I knew when he was the Curator of the Musée de Cluny, and who was kind enough to show me his treasures. He began to speak of his museum to France. "It is full of false objects," he said. "I am separating the bad from the good. Everything I suspect I am placing in my own rooms. Thus my personal furniture is abundant and hideous. My rooms are the sanctuary of fakes, the Panthéon of sham. There are armoires of Boulle, clocks of Louis XIII, credences of Henri II—all made in the Nineteenth Century! But the greatest surprise is the famous Fourteenth Century coffer which is vaunted in the art manuals. I was going to celebrate this coffer in verse. So I examined it. On the wooden panels are chiselled the Joys of Marriage. Suddenly I remarked heroic scenes—chevaliers with their lances going to the war. It was a

strange combination. I then found that the coffer was made up of bits of various periods artfully put together. But let us be discreet. That coffer is our glory. It is so well known that I dare not hide it from the public."

France excused himself from voting on the ground that he never went to the Palais Mazarin. "But to console yourself," he added, "re-read the pages in which Alfred de Vigny notes his visit to Royer-Collard."

It will be remembered that Royer-Collard told De Vigny: "You have no chance of being elected. Besides, I am totally ignorant of your works, for I have read nothing new for thirty years."

France himself had been induced to seek membership of the Académie by Halévy. Every morning his day was planned out: he was to visit the Countess of X., and to talk of the Comte de Chambord and of Chateaubriand. To Madame P. he was to sing the praises of Victor Hugo. He found nobody more stupid than the Academician L., nobody more pompous than Y., and as for B., he talked more nonsense than anybody. But to become a member of the Académie it was necessary to show that one was "equally grotesque." When he wrote his letter of candidature he made it as simple as possible, but Halévy did not approve of it. "You show yourself," he said, "far too presumptuous." Halévy furnished him with a model letter which he copied with docility. In the new version there were at least four faults of French!

The Boswell who has attracted most attention is Jean-Jacques Brousson, who was Secretary of France for seven years. In two large books he has recorded hundreds of anecdotes and observations. No man, it is said, can be a hero to his valet. It should be added that few men can be heroes to their secretaries. Brousson is a terrible iconoclast. He insists on France's amorous escapades, his vanity, his garrulity, his insincerity, and even his lack of knowledge. One would imagine that Brousson was the real author of Anatole France's works. But Paris rejoices in such malicious demolitions. Our time delights in irreverence. Still, Anatole France might have approved. He mocked at much, and taught the world to mock, and there is a kind of poetic justice in his finding a chronicler who has, above all, an eye for his weaknesses.

Would any great man survive the test of his daily doings and his daily conversations being written down? I have rubbed shoulders with great politicians, great writers, great artists, great scientists, great philosophers, and the rest, and they often

had feet of clay. They must be judged by their work. In everything else they are human, all too human.

We can smile at the picture drawn of the Sunday receptions at the Villa Saïd, when Anatole France dressed himself in frock coat, starched shirt, white silk tie, with a pearl in the middle. When the guests had gone, he poked fun at their Sunday clothes, forgetting that he himself had on his Sunday clothes. He distributed flattery broadcast. The Comtesse de Noailles was the divine and melodious poetess. Advocates were Ciceros, and doctors Hippocrates. An orator was Mirabeau, and a painter the Ingres of our time.

If there was a ring at the bell he would hastily give instructions to Josephine, to make excuses for him, but if the intruder managed nevertheless to force his way in, he would explain: "Oh, how happy I am to see you! This is a day to mark with a white stone," and without provocation he would embrace his visitor—a resounding kiss in the ancient style. The visitor would be stifled in the great arms of France, who apparently could not contain his emotion. Encouraged by this reception, the caller would perhaps take from his pocket a first edition of "Thaïs" and beg for the signature of the writer.

"At this request," says M. Brousson, "the face of the Master was clouded. He regarded me with anguish. He seemed to ask 'What is the name of this imbecile?' He made excuses—he had neither pen nor ink. He blamed Josephine. But the visitor, intent on dedication, would produce a fountain-pen. Then France, yielding, would say: 'My dear friend, will you be good enough to dictate to me the exact spelling of your name?'"

There is a story of how he endeavoured to fly from the house one morning, to wander idly along the Quais, and to inspect the bric-à-brac of the *brocanteurs,* the old books, the old engravings, the old curiosities of every sort. But when he is in the street the voice of Josephine bids him return. At the top of her voice, for the delectation of the neighbours, she declares that he cannot go out in his night-shirt. It is useless to walk quickly; Josephine is already behind him and has caught him by the coat-tails. She explains volubly that "Madame" has given her strict orders about his dress. Anatole France is to attend a ceremonious *déjeuner* where there will be ministers and actresses and members of the nobility, and it would never do to go among such folk in a flannel shirt. Moreover, he must put on his patent leather shoes. So Josephine looks after him, dresses him, and taps on all his pockets. "Have you got any money? And your card case? And your watch? And your

keys? And your handkerchief?" Thus is the great man manœuvred!

Was he at least happy? According to M. Brousson, his view of life was: "In all the universe the most unhappy creature is man. They say that man is the king of creation: he is the king of misery, my friend. There is no stronger proof of the inexistence of God than life. If you could read in my soul you would be afraid. There is nobody so unhappy as I am. They believe that I am happy, but I have never been so for an hour."

He was always talking of the good old times. Literature, for him, finished with Nodier, painting with Ingres, and as for furniture nothing graceful had been made since the Consulate. He condemned altogether the present epoch. The Republic was the reign of ugliness with its schools, its barracks, its prefectures, and its statues.

One of his favourite phrases was "stupid as a poet." The poet who represented the quintessence of stupidity was Leconte de Lisle—"presumptuous as a negro and ignorant as a carp. That charlatan had the cheek to translate Homer without knowing a word of Greek." Victor Hugo he denounced in the most absurd manner. "I prefer the Chansons of Béranger to the Odes of Victor Hugo," he said.

He was equally severe with his own work. "Sylvestre Bonnard," he said, "is my most tasteless romance, and was merely written to secure a prize." He was cynical about stealing subjects and phrases. "Why give references?" he asked. "Either your readers know where you have found the passage, and the precaution is useless, or else they are ignorant, and you humiliate them."

Hardly a day went by without a painter asking permission to make a portrait of Anatole France, and although many painters were kept away, the Master himself never found that he had been too often painted. He did everything to facilitate the task of the artist, and showed the most exemplary patience. He would wear any robes and sit in any position, but rarely was he content with what had been done. The portrait painted by the great Carrière was placed in his *cabinet de toilette* because he complained that Carrière had made his nose crooked. Van Dongen painted him to look like an overripe Camembert cheese.

Brousson also wrote a witty account of France's journey to Buenos Ayres. Before the war, he agreed to give a series of lectures in South America.

Everybody is now aware that the rupture between Anatole

France and his secretary occurred at Buenos-Ayres. There M. Brousson was given a return ticket for France. The Master had an *affaire de coeur* with an actress of the Comédie-Française who belonged to a troupe of comedians which had left the shores of France by the same boat to give representations in South America.

It was with great regret that Madame allowed Anatole France to undertake the voyage. Madame insisted that her servant François should accompany him. Doubtless it was partly with the intention that François should look after him, but he was also to act the part of a spy on the movements of France and report to Madame.

On board ship, a tragedian recited passages of Corneille. In response Anatole France recited passages of Racine.

"Ah, the great Corneille!" cried the tragedian.

"There is nobody but Racine!" exclaimed Anatole France.

They regarded each other with disgust. They separated sulkily. In the afternoon they were reconciled. They resumed their recitations.

"Yes," admitted Anatole France, "there are in Corneille passages which recall Racine."

The receptions in the ports of call where Anatole France had to make speeches to academicians in threadbare frock-coats were comic. Anatole France made pompous and insincere discourses. The tragedian, without being asked, also spoke, making the most ridiculous blunders. At Lisbon he addressed the assembly as members of the Academy of Barcelona. "We will never forget Barcelona. Barcelona, thy name is for ever engraved in our heart and in our memory! When we return to France we will tell the French how much Barcelona loves us. And they will be proud!"

The President, after a moment of stupefaction, thanked the tragedian. "Your eulogy of Barcelona was very ingenious. I have heard, indeed, from people who have visited the town, that Barcelona and Lisbon resemble each other."

Anatole France detested these public ceremonies. At Rio de Janeiro he is making love to the actress at dinner when fireworks are sent up, music floats over the water, and illuminated boats surround the ship. There are cries of "Viva Anatolio!" Immediately Anatole France rushes to his cabin, undresses, and gets to bed.

"Master, it is a delegation of Brazilians who have come to take you to preside over a banquet."

"I am dying, *mon enfant,* I am dying. It has taken me suddenly. I shall never finish the voyage."

"Your admirers have brought palms and crowns."

"Let me die in peace. Express my regrets to these good folk. Describe the state in which you find me. They are not barbarians. Tell them to put out their lanterns and to cease their music. Perhaps a good night will restore me. This evening I am dying."

A quarter of an hour later, when the illuminated boats have disappeared, Anatole France is on deck, in good spirits, offering the palms and crowns with great gallantry to the actress. "You have a right to all the crowns, my sovereign."

But he could not always escape so easily. Presentations were sometimes unavoidable.

"Admiral Jazagoie." France, his moustaches upturned exclaimed, "Admiral! You are a hero!" Turning to Brousson, he remarked, "By definition, an admiral is a hero."

"Our national novelist, Vincente Palambo." "Ah, Monsieur, I can then at last enfold in my arms the Balzac of Brazil."

"Professor Germano, our philosopher." "Do not be astonished, illustrious Maître, that we should come to seek from you lessons of wisdom."

"The poet, Ibagouren." "I have had translated some of your verses, and I thought I was listening to Homer and Virgil."

"The musician Martinos." "You have renewed the miracles of Orpheus." So it went on. According to M. Brousson he had these exaggerated compliments for everybody.

Jean-Jacques Brousson was bitterly attacked for his revelations—which in reality have saved the Master from the temporary oblivion into which the greatest fall after their death. Brousson who lives in the Ile Saint-Louis, in an apartment littered with books and papers, dusty and disorderly, yet keeps the vivacity of his native Languedoc. Black eyes, black hair, wrinkled forehead, pointed nose, which Madame de Caillavet found too impertinent—such is a portrait of the man who, like his master, loves to be in slippers. Among his friends, who formed a little colony of writers in the quiet Seventeenth Century island, whose willows dip their branches into the Seine, is Raymond Escholier, Curator of the Victor Hugo Museum and distinguished author of whom I have pleasant memories. There is, besides, the handsome poet Pascal Bonetti. On the island there often lived the Rumanian diplomatist Prince Antoine Bibesco and spirituelle Princess Bibesco (Elizabeth Asquith), Nancy Cunard, the poetess, Marvin Lowenthal, the

Jewish writer, William Aspenwall Bradley who has caused more French writers to be published in America than any man. Bradley married Jenny Serruys, sister of the Economic Expert of the French Government, sister-in-law of M. Granard, Minister Plenipotentiary, and of Pierre Mille.

The island has sheltered at various times Voltaire, Baudelaire, Théophile Gautier. It is still a literary center. But of all its inhabitants Brousson, whose name will be linked with that of Anatole France, as the name of Boswell is linked with that of Dr. Johnson, is the most interesting. What would Madame de Caillavet have thought if, in her salon, in which were gathered George Brandès, Abel Hermant, the Comtesse de Noailles, Loïes Fuller, Combes, Aristide Briand, Joseph Caillaux, Paul-Boncour, Anatole France, somebody had pointed to two quiet young men standing apart, and had said to her, "Those two will one day make more noise in the world than the god of this temple—the little Proust and the little Brousson!"

The younger men reacted against Anatole France. Raymond Escholier actually wrote that France's work was a mere extract of libraries, a mosaic of ancient pages, a bouquet of artificial flowers: that he had never escaped from the paternal bookshop: that if he wished to paint a scene he consulted a faded engraving: that he was not, in the modern living sense, a writer, but a librarian. That is what many of the post-war generation feel. They rejoiced in the Brousson parody. The Brousson books are indeed clever parodies, and cannot be accepted literally. France, treated with disrespect by his Boswell, emerges from the ordeal lovable and human, nearer to us and more understandable, kindly in spite of his scepticism, generous in spite of his foibles, great in spite of his comic misadventures.

Chapter XI

SOME FAMOUS PARIS SALONS

YES, each successive generation regrets the past: it is a strange human penchant to suppose that the past was better. Perhaps it was. I am inclined to think so myself, as I have shown in this book. I have noted that Paris society is more mixed; that it overflows into the public places; that there is perhaps no conversation so sprightly, so excellent, as in the old days. Yet we must not exaggerate. There are many Paris salons which endeavour to maintain a high standard of elegance and even of exclusiveness; and there are many aristocratic ladies and gentlemen who organise balls and fêtes in their homes or in the hotels which are attended by a "select" throng.

Some of us still try to express in the salons our opinions, more or less wittily, more or less sensibly, about books, pictures, theatres, statesmen; and we retail the tittle-tattle of the moment. There are indeed resorts where it is *de rigueur* to have a universal knowledge of current art, scandal, and politics. With the coming of the League of Nations, many dear good women have found a new interest in life, and they will prattle by the hour of their visits to Geneva, and imagine themselves (if the simile be permitted) to be the hinges on which the universe turns.

"Yes, mon cher, when I had tea with Briand I told him . . . I thought Stresemann was looking tired but he explained to me . . . You can think what you please of Chamberlain—all I can say is that I was placed next to him at dinner and . . ."

At one of the salons there was received, on an exceptional mission, a party of American tourists. Their spokesman insisted on making a speech to M. Briand; and he pronounced the name exactly as it is printed—namely Embryon—M. Briand. I do not know how I kept a straight face.

It is hard not to begin to write about politics in a chapter on the Paris salons, for we are all politicians today, and if French ladies have not yet been given the vote, they have recently acquired a new sense of their importance, not merely in the making and unmaking of Ministers (and of that many tales, which belong to the secret history of our times, could be told) but in the direction of international affairs.

The *aristocrates* and the *philosophes* in the Eighteenth Cen-

tury gallantly gossiped France into the Revolution. The Duchesse du Maine with her frivolous salon, the Marquise d'Alembert with her precious salon, Madame Geoffrin with her learned salon, Mademoiselle de Lespinasse with her romantic salon, and Madame du Deffand with her sceptical salon, were as important as the famous men of the pre-revolutionary epoch. One recalls, too, the earlier salors of the gay Madame de Boufflers, described by Madame de Sévigné, and of the intellectual Madame Helvétius, to whom Benjamin Franklin proposed marriage.

During the Third Republic there have been many renowned salons. I have already referred to the salon of Madame Arman de Caillavet in the Avenue Hoche, frequented by Anatole France, Maurice Barrès, Raymond Poincaré, and J. H. Rosny. The Comtesse Diane had a salon in the rue d'Amsterdam, whose habitués included Sully Prudhomme, Pierre Loti, Paul Deschanel, afterwards President of the Republic, Vandal the historian, and Hélène Vacaresco. The salon of Madame de Loynes has been admirably described by Léon Daudet: there loved to congregate many men whom I have known and others whom I never knew: Jules Lemaître, the incomparable critic, Grosclaude, whose puns were sometimes atrocious, Maurice Donnay, who began his career by writing little sketches for the Cabaret of the Chat Noir and ended it at the Académie Française, Rochefort, the trenchant journalist who said that France had thirty million subjects, not counting the subjects of discontent, Arthur Meyer, of the Gaulois, whom I delighted to watch at *répétitions générales* in the fashionable theatres, moving from loge to loge, and bending his white mutton-chop whiskers over the hands of the ladies, Adrien Hébrard, the jovial director of the *Temps,* Calmette the editor of the *Figaro,* Lucien Guitry, the great actor, Antoine, a remarkable innovator in the theatre . . . These names must suffice to indicate how a typical Paris salon was composed.

In the social world of Paris today are such foreigners as the Maharajah of Kapurthala who gives a garden party in his place in the Bois de Boulogne. The balls of the Marquise de Marescot, the Duchesse de Marmier, the Prince de Béarn, the Comtesse de Gramont-Lesparre are well-known. The Baron Pichon receives in the historic Hôtel de Lauzun on the Ile Saint-Louis.

The Duchesse d'Uzès, in her Amazon skirts, leads the hunt in the Rambouillet forest—where the Presidential shoots take place—and for this purpose gets together fashionable parties,

and high ecclesiastics "bless" the hounds in a quaint ceremony which always attracts attention. In the Chantilly forest hunting parties are arranged by the Marquis de Noailles, Prince Murat, and Comte Bertrand de Valon.

Society—which makes a point of going to the Opéra on Mondays and to the Comédie-Française on Tuesdays—also attends the balls at the Cercle Interallié in the noble Faubourg Saint-Honoré, arranged by the Comte Etienne de Beaumont, the Comtesse de Viel-Castel, Mme. Jean Stern, the Comtesse Hocquart de Turtot. M. André de Fouquières is here as elsewhere the arbiter of taste. His brother is the Chef du Protocole at the Palais of the Elysée.

Others who hold noteworthy receptions are the Comtesse de Fels, whose husband is the proprietor of the Revue de Paris, the Comtesse Pecci-Blunt, Mme. Percy Belmont, the Duchesse de Vendôme, sister of the King of the Belgians, at Neuilly-sur-Seine; formerly the Duchesse de Rohan, who wrote several volumes of verse, brought together in her house on the Boulevard des Invalides an interesting group of young poets.

Though this does not pretend to be a complete list, which would be wearisome, one cannot omit the Duchesse de Doudeauville, the Marquise de Ganay, the Duchesse de Bisaccia, the Comtesse de Rohan-Chabot, the Comtesse de Rougemont. There are the literary dinners of Mme. Grosclaude, and of Mme. Louis Stern, and the artistic teas of Mme. Muhlfeld. Again, there are the receptions of the Marquise du Bourg de Bozas, the Baronne Gourgaud, Mme. Fould, the Marquise de Jancourt . . .

The fêtes of the Comte Robert de Montesquiou were in their day renowned. Today there are those of the Comtesse Aymard de Chabrillan, and of the Comtesse Marguerite de Mun in her splendid home of the rue de la Faisanderie. The Comtesse de Noailles presides over a drawing-room of preciosity and refinement, which was once frequented by Maurice Barrès and Edmond Rostand. The beautiful Duchesse de Gramont and the charming Marquise de Polignac, have taken, in Paris social life, something of the place formerly occupied by the Princesse de Sagan and the Duchesse de Mouchy; while the Princesse Edmond de Polignac carries on the Paris tradition in providing a center for musicians and aristocratic music-lovers.

The Comtesse de Béhague, who has a fine private collection of paintings, turns towards artists. The painter Jacques-Emile Blanche is also the pivot of an artistic group. Then there are Franco-America balls promoted by such ladies as the Princesse de Poix and Mme. Taufflieb; and Russian balls promoted by the

Princesse Paley. In this connection too one should write the names of the Duchesse de Brissac and the Marquise d'Armaillé.

These are merely indications of the varied life of the Paris salons. In the course of this book we shall refer to other salons, but in the nature of the case only to a representative few.

The literary salon of Mme. Alphonse Daudet (still happily living) was for many years extremely brilliant. Often it is said that modern salons are "as exclusive and select as a railway station." That was certainly not true of the salon of Mme. Daudet which has had its eras, its heritages, and its shades, but always maintained a high level. In the rue de l'Observatoire and the rue de l'Université, and later in the rue Bellechase, and at Champrosay, which is between Paris and Melun, almost every distinguished writer of the Third Republic has spent pleasant hours.

One lady whom I knew used to ask guests to write their names on the table-cloth. She had a wonderful assortment of table-cloths inscribed with famous names. Had Mme. Daudet chosen to make a collection of table-cloths, her cupboard would have been filled; for at Champrosay, in particular, there were dinner-parties of thirty or so guests every week; and the guests, if they were once accepted, could come without invitation and without warning.

There were two great epochs in her salon—the epoch of Alphonse Daudet, and the epoch of the earlier days of her elder son Léon. In the first were seen Zola, Goncourt, Flaubert. Then Alphonse Daudet died prematurely—at the height of his powers. Léon Daudet, who had been regarded as a comrade, as well as a son, by his father, made his fine début. His companions replaced those of Alphonse Daudet, as the older generation vanished.

Sometimes it is declared that you cannot find Parisians in Paris—or at least Parisians of more than two generations. Certainly Paris society is made up largely of provincials and the children of provincials; but Mme. Daudet, who was Mlle. Allard, can boast of a true Parisian ancestry, going back for a score of generations.

For Léon Daudet I must be permitted a digression. He is a great lusty man who has always struck me as an overgrown schoolboy with an inordinate love of farce. He is like a character out of Rabelais—roaring, rollicking, enjoying life immensely. He fastens opprobrious epithets on his opponents but I have never been able to take him quite seriously. My nick-

name for this Royalist, in Republican France, was "The King's Jester."

I watched him for years, in the Chamber of Deputies, and in various places that he frequented. He is the most vivid personality in France today. There are plenty of men of greater intelligence—his own collaborator Charles Maurras is unquestionably of greater intelligence. There are men in public life who are infinitely wiser, there are men whose character is much more admirable. But Daudet is the man who is most alive. He cannot speak or write without superlatives. He writes superbly but it is always at the top of his voice. For him a poor statesman is not merely a poor statesman—he is an imbecile, a liar, a thief, a traitor. Nor is Daudet content with descriptions—he attempts to bring proofs. His romantic temperament whips itself into a frenzy and bit by bit he reconstructs the crime which he attributes to this or that Minister. In his way he is unequalled. He starts with nothing, but by dint of hammering away day after day, picking up a bit of evidence here, forging a little link there, elaborating a piece of gossip, magnifying a curious circumstance, taking advantage of slight variations, bringing to his support every unpleasant incident of the past fifty years, which he somehow relates to the person and the incident with which he is dealing—he finally concocts a hair-raising story of dissipation and corruption in high places. There is not a prominent personage of the Third Republic who has gone scatheless.

Repetition is his great secret, repetition and repetition with a new twist and an unexpected turn which can be developed further next day in the Action Française. He hits his human heads as though they were nails which he is driving home.

When he has thus worked up a case it appears quite impressive. Yet one is not convinced. All the eloquence and all the evidence of Daudet leave one unpersuaded. That is because one is aware that he has deliberately set out in search of accusations and has consciously manufactured them. Besides, even if we are willing to admit that the devil is as black as he is painted, we cannot admit that everybody is a devil. Our credulity is strained when we are informed that the men with whom we shake hands, who have the confidence of Parliament and the nation, who parade in fashionable drawing-rooms, are idiots, swindlers, schemers, and often murderers. It is hard to believe that it is the practice of Prime Ministers to betray their country, and that nearly all public men are paid by foreign powers. Certainly M. Daudet overdoes things, and if he had not a

great deal of wit, and in his most vigorous fulminations never forgets to be funny, he would quickly become negligible. What saves him is his rich colour, his gusto, his fine eye for comic human weaknesses.

It is precisely his zest and his exaggeration which redeem him. If he were dull he would be intolerable. But he is always lively, and although it may be rough on his victims, we cannot but grin at his sweeping strokes. He abounds in anecdotes and they all reveal grotesque traits. In the articles in his newspaper there are bizarre sketches which one feels ought to be true. But it is in the many volumes of his Memoirs that his best work is to be found. The whole world of the salons and the journals of Paris passes before our eyes. These men and women veritably move. His genius is of course caricatural. Perhaps nobody has been as ridiculous as some of his subjects. Perhaps Daudet has invented these figures and should not have put names to them. For those names are the names of the most famous littérateurs and politicians and it is always a pity to see idols smashed. Yet how wonderful is this demolition! Crash, crash, crash, and another handsome statue that stood in an elegant attitude on its pedestal falls in pieces to the floor, and there is nothing more to be done than to call in the housemaid with her brush and shovel.

Daudet himself takes such obvious pleasure in his performance that his pleasure is contagious. It would be wrong to call him a bull in the china shop of the Republic, for the bull is angry and is unaware of the risibility of his iconoclastic career. Whereas Daudet is highly conscious of the clatter and the clamour and shatters with shouts of ecstasy. Somehow he reminds me of a comedian who comes on the stage with a thousand pieces of crockery. He runs around breaking plates and cups and dishes. That is all he does. But he does it with such marvellous self-satisfaction that the audience roars. The earthenware is flung into the air. A dozen articles are in fragments, and then scores, and then hundreds, and the breakage grows crescendo, working up to an impossible climax of destruction.

If he were malicious one would probably become resentful, but paradoxical as it may sound, one feels that he is not malicious. One feels that he is only boisterous. One feels too that he has not really hurt the writers and artists and statesmen. These figures are not the real persons. They are simply models that he has constructed for the purpose of battering them to bits. The real persons, if they have a sense of humour, will also

laugh at the fate of the unfortunate dummies which are made more or less in their likeness. The victim of the cartoonist does not complain because he has been given a long nose or is turned into a poodle or a ballet-dancer. He is tickled and even flattered by the falsity. So the victims of Daudet do not as a rule take him too seriously. He is like a boy who behind the schoolmaster's back draws in chalk an image on the blackboard. Certainly it is disrespectful but does it really matter?

How different are the styles of Alphonse and of Léon. The one worked in quiet tints, in delicate contours, and had the finest sensibility, the most exquisite imagination. The other works in glaring hues, bold lines, and has violent reactions and a soaring imagination. It is a strange contrast. Yet the older man taught his son everything he knew, and discussed with him the profound problems of life and letters. To Léon he related his reminiscences. Léon was present on all occasions in the memorable meetings which took place in the house of Mme. Daudet at Paris or at Champrosay. Thus from the earliest age Léon was initiated into the manners of the French social world which teems with extraordinary characters. He was observant, and growing up in the midst of the "intellectuals," in an atmosphere of familiarity, he became acquainted with their foibles. Perhaps he lost the sense of veneration which most of us possess until comparatively late in life and saw chiefly the comic or the sordid side of "great" men. Maybe that is a bad education for a boy. Maybe one should not pierce through pretences too soon. Maybe one should be kept aloof from celebrities until late in life. Not that Daudet is incapable of enthusiasms. On the contrary his enthusiasms are as exaggerated as his scorn. For him Charles Maurras is a new Aristotle, and the sweet poet of Provence, Mistral, stands side by side with Virgil. This capacity of admiration is sublime, and is perhaps a proof of essential greatness in Daudet himself.

I should add that Mme. Léon Daudet, in the name of Pampille, has written the most delightful book about French cooking I know.

The receptions from five o'clock until seven o'clock organised by certain newspapers were features of Paris social life. They were veritable salons in which the Paris élite was to be found. There were notably the receptions of the Gaulois and of the Figaro, and today we must add those of the Journal. A recent *cinq à sept* of the Journal brought together politicians and ambassadors such as Lord Crewe of England, Count Manzoni of Italy, Quinones de Léon of Spain, and Gaiffier d'Hestroy

of Belgium; lawyers such as de Moro-Giafferi; members of the Académie-Française, playwrights, actors, French journalists, and resident foreign writers. At these receptions it is the custom to provide first-class entertainments.

The salon of the Princesse Mathilde, the niece of Napoléon, was in earlier days particularly hospitable. Her mansion was in the rue de Berri. During the receptions on Sunday evenings the Princess would often continue to work at the piece of tapestry which occupied her at the moment, while her guests talked together in little groups. The salon of Madame Aubernon was the resort of the littérateurs of Paris. So was the salon of the painter Madeleine Lemaire, by the Parc Monceau, and her costume balls were splendid fêtes.

Robert de Montesquiou called her "L'Impératrice des Roses," because of the roses, Gloire-de-Dijon, Paul Néron, Damas, Madame Edouard Herriot, which perfumed her apartment and were painted on her canvases. Anatole France and Marcel Proust were delighted with her work, "pleine de fraîcheur and de frissons"; and princes frequented her private hôtel in the rue Monceau. That was before the war. Afterwards, alas! her *atelier* was deserted; and she admitted that she could not understand the paintings of Claude Monet. Were his water-lilies better than her roses? Tout passe, tout lasse, tout casse!

Nor should one forget in a retrospective view the salon of Juliette Adam, or that of Madame Hochon, or that of Judith Gautier. Again, the salon of Madame Germain deserves a special mention in the history of Parisian society. At Sèvres Madame Léon Cladel had her salon.

In the salon of Madame Decori, at the top of a large building on the Grands Boulevards, I met many politicians, and after the war she was I believe the first to receive the representatives of the new Russia. Madame Ménard-Dorian welcomed writers and politicians at Passy long ago in the agitated Dreyfus days; and there recently I met Romain-Rolland. Madame Ménard-Dorian had turned her house into a rendezvous for all kinds of societies—mostly "advanced"—and she would look into this room and into that, always hurrying off to attend to another group of guests.

Romain-Rolland, a tall thin man, dressed in an old-fashioned frock-coat, has long lived in Switzerland, but he frequently came to Paris. He was in Switzerland during the war, and there he wrote a series of articles for the Journal de Genève which, afterwards collected in book form under the title of Au-dessus de la Mêlée, made him one of the best-hated men in

Europe. It was his attitude towards the war which caused the rejection by the Comédie-Française of his revolutionary play, "Danton," but another revolutionary play by him, "Le Jeu de l'Amour et de la Mort," was produced by Firmin Gémier at the Odéon.

Rolland, who was born in 1866, spent his young manhood in teaching at the Ecole Normale and at the Sorbonne. He was a pioneer, inasmuch as he introduced into the Sorbonne the study of musical history and criticism. He published lives of Beethoven, Michelangelo, and Tolstoï, and a history of opera in Europe before Lulli. But he is, of course, chiefly famous for his frankly autobiographical "Jean-Christophe," which ran into ten volumes. It was crowned by the Académie Française in 1913, and has been translated into the principal languages of the world.

He produced on me the impression of a man who has never lost his professorial manner. We were united in the house of Madame Ménard-Dorian to constitute a committee to publish in French the works of Prince Peter Kropotkin. Romain-Rolland took the foremost part in the proceedings. Madame Kropotkin had come from Moscow. She was delighted that her husband, who had spent most of his working life in England, and had written most of his books in English, was to be honoured in France. It will be remembered that the implacable foe of the Romanoffs, though an old man, decided after the Revolution to uproot himself again and return to Moscow. The real did not correspond to his ideal. He died disappointed at the turn taken by events. Madame Kropotkin lived unmolested in Moscow though she was not regarded with a friendly eye. Nevertheless the Moscow authorities resolved to convert into a museum the house where Kropotkin was born, and Madame Kropotkin collected souvenirs of her husband.

In London a committee similar to that of Paris was formed: its members included Bertrand Russell, Bernard Shaw, Cunningham Graham, H. G. Wells and Edward Carpenter.

Among the members of the French committee were Ferdinand Buisson, the father of modern education in France, Charles Gide, the well-known economist, Charles Richet, the scientist, and Léon Blum, the leader of the Socialist party. For me the capital work of Kropotkin is his book Mutual Aid. When it was written Darwinism was understood to imply a universal struggle for existence, but Kropotkin showed that in fact many species owe their survival to the help which members of these species give to each other. This mutual aid is to be

found among the lowest animals of creation and among the highest.

Princess Sacha Kropotkin, the daughter of Prince Peter Kropotkin, was often in the Paris circles. She is one of the most versatile young women of my acquaintance. She writes well, she lectures, she designs dresses, and she interests herself in decoration. She occupies herself too with politics and with economics. She introduced me to Taïroff, the vivacious director of the extraordinary Kamerny theatre of Russia, which was badly received in France because these rhythmic representations in some mysterious manner were supposed to teach Bolshevism.

A most interesting Englishwoman, Mrs. Bethell, kept open house at Auteuil for liberal-minded politicians and writers. They had but to come to Paris and they were accommodated as long as they pleased to stay. There, if I remember aright, I first came into touch with Norman Angell, who, in his real name, Ralph Lane, had a long journalistic career in Paris, first as the Editor of the Daily Messenger, and afterwards as the Editor of the Continental Daily Mail. He is a short and slight man, with pale face and commanding brow. His pacifism has been much misunderstood. Never did he declare that war was impossible, but he proved in his "Great Illusion" that, with the modern interlocking of interests, war could not be profitable, and should be abandoned by sensible men. One day he was the principal personage in a meeting held in my house to consider the advisability of publishing a magazine that would tell the truth about international affairs. The idea was never carried out because of an impracticable proposal that every article should be printed in three languages.

There comes back to me, too, the fine figure of H. W. Nevinson, who wrote supremely well, but who quixotically espoused every unpopular cause. Nobody ever resembled so much D'Artagnan: he was erect and alert, with challenging moustache and impériale. The last time I saw him he consulted me on the possibility of undertaking a mission to stop the fighting between the French and the Riffans in Morocco!

Comte Stanislas de Castellane, who lived by the Champ de Mars, was good enough to ask for my assistance in organising a political salon which should be open to foreigners in France. For some time the dinner parties were extremely successful and interesting. The guest of honour was usually a Frenchman, such as M. Loucheur, M. Barthélemy, M. François-Marsal, and others who were playing a great part in industry, law, finance,

politics, and letters. The drawback was that occasionally the chief guest would stand with his back to the fireplace after dinner, and instead of encouraging conversation, would deliver a sort of lecture. Similar reunions were held in the salon of M. and Mme. Margaine on the Boulevard Saint-Germain: among those of us who went to these receptions were Léon Blum, Henri Simon, Henry de Jouvenel, Daladier, Emile Borel, Albert Milhaud, and others who were regarded as leaders of the Left. Another interesting political salon was that of the Comtesse Greffulhe in the rue d'Astorg.

Of a more literary character were the assemblies in the house of Abel Chevalley, in the Avenue d'Orléans. Abel Chevalley had been in the diplomatic service, but he made a close study of English novels and wrote one of the best books in existence on this subject. Stephen Gwynn, James Stephens, Harold Laski, and the delightful Chanoine Dimnet, charming writer and charming *causeur,* a priest of the Eighteenth Century astray in our modern world, were among the frequenters of this salon, and on one occasion he held a reception in honour of H. G. Wells. Mr. and Mrs. Prince, in the rue de Grenelle, were also amiable hosts. There Paul Doumer, the President of the Senate, René Benjamin, the well-groomed French writer, whose vitriolic pen was employed upon the professors, the lawyers, and the judges of the Republican régime, and Romain Coolus, the President of the Dramatic Authors' Society, indulged in spirited arguments. I recall too the wife of a famous publisher whom I met there. She had most estimable and tender sentiments. One day after an excursion in the country, she had remarked a little female donkey in a huge field belonging to a friend. In the evening bridge was played. It was her turn to put down a card. She seemed to be dreaming, and everybody began to drum on the table. Nothing aroused her from her reverie. At last it was necessary to remind her that she was keeping the whole party waiting. She looked up in astonishment.

"Forgive me," she said, "I was thinking about Lisette, the donkey. Can you not speak to the proprietor about her? How terribly lonely the little animal must be in that great field! Could she not be given a companion?"

After the war the Marquess of Crewe and the Marchioness of Crewe restored the British Embassy to its old rank as a great social center. I have known a number of British Ambassadors —Lord Bertie of Thame, who was nicknamed His Excellency the Bull, Lord Derby, to whom the Ambassadorship was an incident in a varied life, Lord Hardinge, and his exquisite

daughter, the Hon. Diamond Hardinge whose untimely death Paris greatly deplored . . .

I recall a curious counsel sent from the Editor of a newspaper to a Paris correspondent. "Model yourself sartorially" was the advice, "on the Embassy." "Yes," replied the correspondent, "but will you please be more explicit. Touching the matter of trousers, for example, shall I copy the checks of the Ambassador, or the stripes of the First Secretary?"

The Embassy, in the Faubourg Saint Honoré is filled with memories of great men and beautiful women. It was built for the Duc de Charost; and was bought by the Duke of Wellington from Princess Pauline Borghese, the prettiest sister of Napoléon. Among those who have trodden its velvety lawn—the most English thing in Paris—and walked under its stately trees are Lord Lytton, Lord Lyons, Lord Granville, Lord Stuart de Rothesay, Lord Cowley, Lord Dufferin and Ava . . . Lavish were the receptions given. As many as 1,500 guests have witnessed scenes of pageantry. Most of the men who won this blue riband of diplomacy believed in "ceremonial display," in "noble hospitalities." Lord Crewe, who did me the honour to invite me often to the Embassy, was a tall erect patrician figure: possessing wealth, lineage, high rank, culture, and an official experience of forty years, he was welcomed by Parisian society. Lady Crewe, the daughter of the Earl of Rosebery, ably and gracefully carried out the multitudinous social duties of the Embassy.

Of the American Ambassadors I have known, Mr. Myron T. Herrick stands out most clearly. He was popular in a sense that the British Ambassador could hardly, according to diplomatic precedent, be; for the British Ambassador is the distinguished personal representative of the King and as such must be exceedingly dignified; whereas the American Ambassador is expected to be democratic and more familiar. Mr. Herrick certainly fulfilled these expectations. One could not help loving him. He was assisted in his social functions by Mr. Parmely Herrick, and Mrs. Parmely Herrick. Only recently has the United States Ambassador been fittingly housed. The Embassy in the Avenue d'Iéna was opened in 1925: a notable event in the history of American diplomatic relations with Europe. The marble-walled mosaic-floored hall is the chief rendezvous of Americans on the Continent.

I cannot resist the temptation to tell one story. Paris newspaper men gave a big dinner party at Montmartre; and the Ambassadors attended. After the dinner, some English danc-

ing-girls from the Folies-Bergère came to give a performance. Mr. Herrick, always amiable, pleasantly remarked that these Tiller Girls were to be thanked for their entertainment. Thereupon, taking advantage of the occasion, as at a common signal, the girls rushed forward and embraced the kindly Ambassador. On one side there was, of course, only good-humoured amusement, on the other perfect innocence. Yet a newspaper man cabled a story which appeared with such headlines as:

American Ambassador Has Gay Time at Montmartre
Is Kissed by Dancing Girls From
FOLIES-BERGERE

As I understood from Mr. Herrick, explanations had to be given; and he was properly annoyed at a foolish indiscretion which made of a delightful little private incident a matter of public concern and raised questions of diplomatic decorum.

I could speak too of the diplomatic representatives from a score of countries who have worthily maintained, in the social sphere, the prestige of their land. But, as the phrase goes, space forbids. Finally the various French Ministries often hold brilliant social functions; as does the President of the Republic in the Eighteenth Century Palace of the Elysée, where I have personally known M. Raymond Poincaré, M. Paul Deschanel, M. Alexandre Millerand, and M. Gaston Doumergue.

If France is democratic, and the French Presidents are middle-class men when they have not sprung from the peasant class, Paris is nevertheless fond of entertaining Royalty. Nobody is so Royalist as your good Republican. Were I to begin to count the Kings and Queens and Princes I have seen arriving by the little Royal station at the Porte Dauphine in the Bois de Boulogne, to be driven down the Champs-Elysées to the Palace, or to the official apartments at the Quai d'Orsay, I should draw up a list almost as long as that of Gotha. Still longer would it be if I were to enumerate the Royal personages who often come to Paris incognito, to amuse themselves, to do a little shopping, to visit their French friends. There are half-a-dozen who regularly come and go: to say nothing of exiled pretenders who live in or near the capital. When they are not obliged to be ceremonious, they are particularly simple in their manners; and in the hotels and restaurants the resident can rub shoulders with them. Princes are, in these days, almost plebeian. The King of Sweden—who plays tennis under the name of Mr. G.—— once well summed up the social as well as political tendencies. In France, as in other Continental countries, Left

has come to stand for Radicalism and Right for Conservatism. When the King at tennis was returning the balls badly, Suzanne Lenglen called out: "Plus à gauche, Majestè—toujours plus à gauche!" (More to the left, Your Majesty, still more to the left!) And the King answered, a trifle sadly: "That is what my advisers are always telling me."

More to the Left—still more to the Left!

Chapter XII

ELEGANCE AND LETTERS

In Paris elegance and letters long ago made a pact. There are plenty of Bohemian writers, there are plenty of eccentric painters; but there are also many writers, and painters too, who pride themselves on conforming to social usages, and who are admitted into every fashionable drawing-room. Sometimes indeed they have their own drawing-room, frequented by the "best" set. In passing we have peeped into the drawing-rooms of writers and painters; those of such dissimilar men as Alphonse Daudet and the Comte Robert de Montesquiou; those of Van Dongen and of Madeleine Lemaire, one in the jazzier modernist note, the other in the quieter pre-war note. We have seen too how the French aristocracy opens its doors to men and women of artistic professions, and how there persists, in spite of vast social changes, something of that spirit which in the days of Louis XIV caused the nobility to patronise the arts. The Comtesse de Noailles is at once a poetess and a hostess; and there are many other representatives of old families who have no pretensions to the arts but who rightly think it their duty to encourage the arts—that is to say, to welcome the artists. That this spirit should be kept alive, is a proof that traditions cannot be killed even by Republicanism. It is the business of the élite to help those who are engaged in creative work; and if nobody now expects material help, as in the days when kings and princes distributed favours, yet it is good that a kind of moral support is still forthcoming. The elegant forms of art and aristocracy ought to be associated; though I do not mean that a more robust art does not flourish best independently in the richer soil of democracy.

Now and again a Princess or a Duchess identifies herself especially with the men and women who are producing artistic work. There is, to give an example, the Princesse Lucien Murat.

The Princesse Lucien Murat opened a novel salon on the Quai de l'Horloge. It was at once a salon and a bookshop and a picture-gallery: chiefly, however, I should describe it as a salon. In the shadow of the statue of Henri IV on the Pont Neuf, painters and writers, belonging to what can properly be called the smart social set, congregated in the house named

Fermé La Nuit. That name, borrowed from Paul Morand, struck the keynote of this literary and artistic circle.

The Princesse, witty, indefatigable, beautiful, is the daughter of the Duc de Rohan: her home overlooks the Invalides. But she felt that to provide a special meeting-place where artists, dilettantes, and flâneurs, could take tea and talk, would be more "modern" than merely to open her mansion to them. So she spends a large part of her day in her "shop." The walls are lined with Daumiers, Toulouse-Lautrecs, Steinleins, Forains, Sems, and Willettes. There are paintings by Utrillo, Halicka, André Lhôte, Marie Laurencin. The latest books, especially those which have the sophisticated flavour of modernity, are on the shelves. . . . There we discussed the "Vie amoureuse de la Grande Catherine," for the Princesse has written a volume in which she recounts in sprightly fashion the love affairs of Catherine the Great. We were *spirituel* and slightly daring. We affected, as is the mode, a certain cynicism.

Paul Morand, who is the complete cosmopolitan, I knew not only at the Quai d'Orsay, but in this and similar Paris salons. He is a tall vivid person with an epigram always on his lips. His brown eyes flash with humour. Recently he married the Princesse Soutzo, but this has not interfered with his love of rapid travel. His conversation is full of swift impressionistic phrases, fugitive notations. His books are colourful and vivacious. He has a quick eye and a lively pen. In half-a-dozen pages he takes us from London to Paris, to Northern Africa, to Turkey, to Italy, always with an eye for the significant. His points are picked out luminously. He is the cultured incarnation of French post-war enterprise. He is the modern French literary man of the world.

In France since Pierre Loti gave us a new exotic literature, writing of passionate and mysterious Asia, sunburnt Senegal, minaret-covered Stamboul, grave and langorous India, vague phosphorescent Polar spaces, there has issued from the press a multitude of descriptive volumes. The brothers Tharaud revealed the charm of Morocco, and Myriam Harry of Palestine and Syria. But to the newer men who have helped to destroy the legend that the French cannot travel Paul Morand is the most dazzling. He is the globe-trotter-in-chief of literature. He takes us on swift trips round the world, touching Chicago, Yokohama, Manila, Bangkok and painting unforgettable vignettes. Jules Verne taught us how to encircle the globe in eighty days. Now we can put a girdle round the earth in far fewer days. According to Morand, in 1930 the child will ask

its mother, "Can I take a little stroll as far as India?" and the mother will reply, "Don't forget to take a little bread and chocolate."

Formerly the writer lived in an Ivory Tower. Now he, like Morand, flies to the Ivory Coast. He inhabited castles in Spain; now he prefers the temples of Indo-China.

Morand was enabled to satisfy this love of the voyage by the position which he held in the French diplomatic service. Successively, he was attached to the Embassy at London, at Rome, and at Madrid. He then took charge of the section at the Quai d'Orsay which attends to the distribution of French works in foreign countries.

The French Government, rightly or wrongly—for the whole service has been criticised—considered that it was an excellent method of propaganda to encourage the circulation of French books in other countries. We hear much of French politics and of French economics: the result is not always favourable to France. But there were those who contended that France would be better appreciated if French plays and French actors were sent abroad as much as possible, and French literature was also made an article of exportation.

The objection to these methods of advertising France was that in practice only certain writers who were connected with the Nouvelle Revue Française were advertised.

Morand comes of a writing family. His father—who collaborated with the ill-fated Marcel Schwob—was director of the Ecole Nationale des Arts Décoratifs, and was formerly Conservateur of the Dépôt des Marbres. Camille Mauclair relates how he used to meet Paul Morand as a boy running about among the blocks of marble awaiting the chisel of the sculptor in the rue de l'Université. It is there that the State—always concerned with the development of art—keeps the blocks of marble which it has bought, and which are to be put at the disposal of sculptors who obtain official commissions. In this depot there are ateliers loaned by the State: Rodin was the tenant of one of them.

When Mauclair read in a French review the earlier stories which subsequently appeared in the volume "Ouvert la Nuit," he was so impressed that he sat down and wrote to the author: "You are at the head of your generation." He was completely ignorant of the fact that this homage was addressed to the silent bare-legged boy who used to play among the marbles.

It was great fun to listen to Morand giving his descriptions of his voyages. When he was in good form, in conversation, as

in his books, he would remind us, for example, that when the French missionaries, guided by Indians, first saw the Niagara Falls, they fell on their knees and chanted the Magnificat; while today the negro on the restaurant wagon merely calls out "Niagara Falls, Boss!"

That is typical of the contrasts he loves to draw. His phrases are always deft. They are sharp and are meant to give an idea of motion. I recall that when he wished to indicate the changing scenery of the journey towards Vancouver, facing the Far East, he said that every mile "marked a conquest over the flowers." When a storm broke over the ship in which he was crossing the Pacific Ocean, he tried to find the most striking image which, in a few words, would convey the force of the elements, the rolling of the packet-boat, and its immensity and its commodity. What he found to convey all this was: "In the interior of the ship one heard another tempest: the ram-like blows of the swimming bath against the ship's side."

Japan appeared to him "thick-set, cultivated like a work-girl's balcony, its trees written on the sky. The dwarf woods were curled with curling tongs . . . Peasants were bending in the rain, hatted with thatch-like roofs, stooping over a rice field between two waters."

There is irony in his record of a conversation with a missionary in Japan, travelling like a package sent by parcel post. "You must have great difficulty in converting the Buddhist?" The missionary replied: "If only they were Buddhists! But they are pagans and savages. They adore the sun and the moon."

In Pekin, on the roof of the Grand Hotel, in the shadows, there are diners in white around white tables. "Chinese domestics in white robes, like surgeons on duty, surround them with their diligent and silent service, of a secret ubiquity which one cannot do without after having known it." "The Chinese are mysterious conjurers, smiling at nature, and producing from their wide sleeves the fruits of the earth." But the picture which Morand paints of China is not romantic. "Everything is grey under a Mongolian wind. Everything is exact, hard, and real, in spite of uncommon proportions. There is only a very large number: never infinity. Nothing speaks to the heart. Europe and its old-fashioned graces, America with its child-like naïvety, have not accustomed us to such inhumanity. China is a monolith, compact, indifferent. By the impulsion of universal avalanches it can be moved, but no internal impulse has ever thrown it forward."

Morand excels in confounding with happy phrases the evidences of Western civilisation, modern hotels, bars, jazz-bands, flirtations, scandalous conversations, with the primitive unchangeable evidences of Eastern civilisation: the music-halls, the American trains, the motor-cars, the whiskies and sodas, the men with naked torsos, wearing pantaloons, obscure taverns with opium-drugged denizens, children wearing collars to deceive the demons into the belief that they are dogs . . .

In Shanghai is what Morand called "the largest bar in the world." It is fifty yards long. A thousand bottles are reflected in the mirrors. A hundred ventilators turn along the ceiling. Poker dice rattle. The Chinese receiving opium from their white enemies pour out for their white enemies alcoholic poisons in a toxic duel. Cocktails of which the West has hardly heard have there been invented and their names have been taken from every language. An Oriental aquarium furnishes him with a series of pictures. There are fish flat as plates, without tails or fins. There are others perpetually fanning themselves. There are some like ships with great sails spread, carried by the currents. The fish are of sapphire blue or of an incredible cobalt. They are puffed like bladders or as thin as an evening-dress watch. There are fish with lions' heads, fish with lobsters' claws, fish with peacock's tails, fish dressed in striped convict clothes, fish which climb trees, fish with feathers, fish with moustaches, fish which are transparent, fish which the Chinese tattoo, and so on in an amusing fish tale.

These things which he sees as few people see them, he has written down, but I have heard him recount them in company; for he can talk as well as he writes.

In the same circles I met Jean Giraudoux, who may properly be regarded as the father of the Morand school of literature. He made fashionable this method of juggling with images and of performing acrobatic feats with words. Curiously he never obtained quite the same popularity as some of his disciples; but he is a rare writer, agile, clever, distinctive. He too was at the Quai d'Orsay which seems to be a favourite soil for authorship.

Giraudoux was kindly and sympathetic. One mistake I think he made: it was in writing "Bella," a novel which sets in opposition an imaginary person whom everybody identified as Raymond Poincaré, and another imaginary person whom everybody identified as Philippe Berthelot. Both of them were his official superiors. He took sides, painting one of them as altogether admirable, and the other as altogether despicable. One of them had the beau rôle and the other played a dastardly

part. It seems to me unfair thus to mix fact with fiction. Obviously a novelist has an easy game in making his puppets reprehensible but he should not make them identifiable unless he sticks strictly to the truth. This kind of *roman à clé* cannot, I think, be justified.

In appearance Giraudoux is somewhat gaunt, with huge goggles perched on a thin nose. He liked to tell anecdotes of his young son, who at the age of seven made little repartees worthy of his father. Thus one day Giraudoux was showing the boy a picture of the early Christians being thrown into the den of lions. The child suddenly cried, "Oh, papa! Look at that poor lion which has no Christian!"

Again, an aged aunt was showing her portrait, taken in the days when she was a celebrated beauty under the Empire. "Who is it?" asked the child. "It was myself when young." "Yes, but who is it now?" This naïve cruelty of children bears some resemblance to the sophisticated cruelty of their elders today.

From the frequent talks I had with Giraudoux, as well as from his books, I gathered that he stood for the reconciliation of European peoples. Certainly this is not in itself cynical; yet I think that some of his disciples—not Giraudoux himself—affected such an attitude at one time because it seemed paradoxical to picture France and Germany as friends. There was a startling novelty in the idea just after the war. What! we had fought our natural allies, France and Germany had inflicted almost irreparable injury on each other, through a mere misunderstanding! However just was the contention that the two countries which had cherished an age-long feud were dependent on each other, and should embrace, it was rather difficult for the bourgeois mind to accept it; and so the bourgeois, in the French phrase, was *épaté*.

"Art has no frontiers." "Yes," replied the French Nationalist, "but the artist has." The French Nationalist was prepared to lead a riot at the Opéra when Wagnerian music was played again; and poor Saint Saëns, composer of "Samson et Delilah," who had fulminated against the German musician, and had waged a furious campaign against German art, was brokenhearted at the thought that the Master of Bayreuth should ever return to Paris. Even Heine, the most French of German poets, who loved Paris and lived in Paris and died in Paris, was the object of French fury. As for Nietzsche, the philosopher whose teaching may be summed up in the exhortation to be strong (an exhortation that should have rejoiced the heart of the

Nationalist) his name was anathema during the war years and long after the war. Again, had not the German "intellectuals" signed a manifesto against France instead of against Germany? Never should French and Germans meet again.

I think that such French "intellectuals" as Giraudoux, artists who were able to take a broader view, deserve much more credit for the change in French feeling than is generally attributed to them. As artists they were not didactic, but some of them also happened to be diplomatists, and they formed a little band at the Quai d'Orsay that strove for sweetness and light in international relations. Now German influences in literature and art are making themselves felt with a vengeance in France!

It must be confessed that a few French intellectuals, in their love for the unusual, the unpopular, and of the false cosmopolitanism that is, reduced to its ultimate expression, really cynicism—that is to say, contempt for one's own fellows—and snobbery—that is to say, a belief in the superiority of foreigners over one's own people—pushed their pacifism to the point of perversity. They broke completely away from the doctrine of rootedness in one's own environment, which is exceedingly precious and true if it is not exaggerated, and accepted the silly notion that the best lies over the borders, just as the hysterical person in search of happiness always believes it to be round the corner. Between Nationalism carried to excess, engendering bellicosity and xenophobia, and cosmopolitanism, carried to the extreme of loving one's remote neighbour at the expense of one's immediate neighbour, belauding the alien and despising the compatriot, there is surely a middle position from which one sees the good and bad in both.

Let us not pursue this matter too far. Giraudoux, as I say, is judicious in his appreciations and is earnest in his desire for a new epoch in Europe; and he can hardly be praised too highly.

A salon which was frequented by these politico-literary men was that of the Prince and Princess Antoine Bibesco. Bibesco was for some time the Rumanian Minister in Washington but he never ceased to be a Parisian. I sometimes lunched with him in the old house which he bought and transformed in the Ile Saint-Louis. It was at the corner of the Quai Bourbon at the end of the island. Looking out of the window, the water lapping on either side, one had the impression of being in the prow of a boat sailing down the Seine. Prince Bibesco wrote two plays which had great *succès d'estime* and some popular success in Paris. He was one of the keenest men in the French capital.

He married Elizabeth Asquith. She was as epigrammatic in

her conversation as in her clever writings. I could not keep pace with her. She shot ahead and circled around and left me dizzy. In the Quai Bourbon house, which was ingeniously decorated, for Bibesco is talented as a decorator, there was a crowd of the most brilliant men and women of many nationalities.

Literary talent often runs in families. The Princess Bibesco is, of course, the daughter of the late Lord Oxford. But there are no fewer than three Princess Bibescos who are well known in Paris as authors. There is the Princesse Marthe Bibesco, née Lahovary, author of Le Perroquet Vert, and of Catherine-Paris. There is the Princesse Jeanne Bibesco, who on her mother's side is a descendant of Marshal Ney: her lectures at the Catholic Institute showed her deep knowledge of philosophic subjects. Another cousin of the family is the famous poetess, the Comtesse de Noailles. One wonders whether in such a case the use of pseudonyms is not "indicated." There has been much confusion. Princess Elizabeth Bibesco is the gayest and most charming of the trio; and it was an intellectual entertainment to listen to her and the frequenters of the Quai Bourbon exchanging their sallies.

An interesting salon was that of the Misses de Courcy Duncan—Mabel and Ethel. They had lived in Paris in the days of Richard Whiteing, author of No. 5 John Street. They venerated his memory. They were friends of Judith Gautier. They collected round themselves a variegated society in which I was glad to move: men and women of the French aristocracy; critics such as Paul Souday, whose bulky figure towered above the heads of the other guests; René Lalou, a professor who has written a comprehensive survey of contemporary French literature; public men like Sir Thomas Barclay, my old friend and one-time colleague; and, above all, Charles Maurras.

Charles Maurras, in spite of his reputation for casuistry I found simple and particularly lovable. It was difficult to maintain a conversation with him, because he was very deaf, and he refused to avail himself of ear trumpets or other appliances. For my part I quickly became self-conscious and embarrassed in a crowded salon when I was compelled to shout at him as loudly as possible. But when he talked, his face lit up with enthusiasm. His mind is exceptionally well-stored. He has a surprising power of dialectic. His philosophy is clearly constructed. He employed his skilful arguments in the service of the Royalist cause. Doubtless his excuses for violence are detestable. Yet he is personally charming and is a model of classical writers.

Many people consider him to be the greatest living French writer; and I have reason to know that Anatole France, who was poles apart from him in political thought, came near to sharing that view.

Miss Nathalie Barney, who was the "amazone" of Rémy de Gourmont, held wonderful receptions in her salon of the rue Jacob, illustrated by the memory of Adrienne Lecouvreur. Soft-footed Chinese servants opened the door. One entered a dimly lit room and gradually found one's friends in obscure corners. Miss Barney was draped in pale grey robes. There was the Duchesse de Clermont-Tonnerre, and Madame Colette, the creator of Claudine, and Madame Delarue-Mardrus, who has written exquisite stories, and the dark Dr. Mardrus who translated the Thousand and One Nights. This translation is incomparable. I remember him always dressed in black, with black gloves. He is an Orientalist, an explorer, an historian, and a magician. I do not know his origins—doubtless they are Eastern; and I cannot but think of him as a modern Cagliostro who has lived in all ages, and has, as he himself says, "stabilised" himself at the age of forty-five. He was surely a contemporary of Haroun al-Raschid. He returns, after long absences, from Africa and from Central Asia. Looking around one would discover Professor Seignobos, familiarly called Captain—nobody knows why—and Salomon Reinach, the archeologist, and a score of other curious men and women.

A similar salon was that of Madame Aurel in the rue du Printemps. There every week she welcomed writers—especially the younger writers. Her husband is the scholar and poet, Alfred Mortier. Madame Aurel, a handsome woman, held a kind of court, sitting in state while one of her guests delivered a little lecture on a promising poet. She did much to encourage youthful talent and in her salon unpublished verses were recited and applauded.

Madame Rachilde, of the Mercure de France, white-haired but still active (to her I refer again in my chapter on French women), likewise received those who interested themselves in the Mercure de France group. Among this group was Georges Duhamel—or Denys Thevenin: quiet-speaking, gazing placidly out of gold-rimmed spectacles. I consider that he must take high rank among the French writers of today. There is a philosophical purpose in almost everything he does, which reminds one of the men of the Eighteenth Century. But his moral does not overlay his story; he does not preach directly, though

he conveys in all his narratives an idea that he wishes to set in a clear light.

There has been a tendency to scoff at this method. It is held that one should write with absolute detachment, and that there should be no particular significance in what is related. But surely this is mere confusion of thought. Georges Duhamel is perfectly objective in his presentation, but how is it possible for anybody who has considered life, who has taken up any attitude towards life, not to reveal his outlook in the very choice of the incidents which he relates? It may be perfectly proper to protest against the blatantly allegorical manner, but unless a narrative has something of the character of a parable it is empty and uninteresting.

At any rate Georges Duhamel, unlike some of those who believe themselves modern, thinks first and writes afterwards, and his thought is to be found in what he writes.

When I last met him he had just returned from a long voyage. For him a voyage is not only an occasion for sight-seeing, but is an opportunity for meditation. He observes, he absorbs, and he stocks his mind with notations. We met in a remarkable institution which lies just outside the gates of Paris. It is a club-house for travellers who group themselves together under the title of "Autour du Monde."

An excellent library filled with books relating to every country in the world was there to be found. The large grounds contained a series of gardens representative of many lands. There were collections of tropical plants; there were somewhat disorderly and variegated English gardens; and there were clipped and formal French gardens.

Duhamel certainly puts into practice his belief that the writer should see as much of the world as possible. He divides the year into two parts: for six months he disappears, he voyages, sometimes far afield, sometimes in France itself. There is a sense of leisure in all that he does. His appearance, unlike that of Morand, the globe-trotter, is that of a man who will not allow himself to be hurried. He is tall with a slight stoop; his eyes are quiet behind great round glasses; his round clean-shaven face with the great expanse of forehead and the bald cranium gives him a benevolent air. Caricaturally, he would resemble Mr. Pickwick; but nevertheless he looks what he is—a scientist and a scholar.

He began life as a doctor working in a laboratory, and although he practised the art of writing, he can hardly be said to have come seriously into the professional literary field until

after the war. The war disturbed his habits as it disturbed the habits of everybody. His medical skill was utilised on the battle front for four years. There, under the roofs of improvised hospitals, and often under the canvas of tents, he bent over the wounded and the dying with that calm gentleness which is the chief mark of his manner. His sympathy was profound, but there remained with him his scientific curiosity in the whole spectacle of life.

What is chiefly apparent in his works is a sort of intellectual pity. He describes coolly what he sees, and he repeats with a strange exactitude the confessions that are made to him. "La Vie des Martyrs" and "Civilisation" are undoubtedly among the best records of the human reaction to the dreadful war days, while "La Possession du Monde" may be regarded as a long essay on the need of sympathy and understanding.

Just as he wrote towards the end of the war of the things he had actually seen, so does he now need to wander abroad for half a year in order to return laden with material from which he may select the matter of his stories, his essays, and his plays during the other half-year.

He likes, above all, to travel slowly. He will take the train and the steamer when it is necessary, but he prefers a knapsack on his back and the long road before him. It is thus that he can contemplate the panorama of nature and of humanity. Even when he is at home he prefers the country to the town. On his return he makes a little tour of his literary acquaintances in Paris, but after looking with delight upon the Luxembourg Gardens for some time, he goes off to his cabinet de travail in the country. There he works at leisure, surrounded by his family, on the most intimate terms with the villagers.

His plays—particularly "La Journée des Aveux" produced at the Théatre des Champs-Elysées by the Pitoëffs—stamp him as an admirable playwright of the new school. Placidly he sets himself to dissect the life of a family which is to all appearances happy. Bit by bit he exposes the vice, the misery, the despair that have taken possession of all the members of this seemingly contented household. He does this not to arouse our indignation, but to awaken our pity. That is his purpose throughout his work.

Romanticism he disdains; it is incompatible with the method of scientific investigation that he has introduced into literature. But he is equally opposed to naturalism or realism as it was understood and practised by Zola and de Maupassant. What Zola accomplished was to bring us back to verity, but he did

so by means of an immense documentation. Documentation cannot replace intimate knowledge.

Duhamel told me how, when he read for the first time "La Débâcle" he had just passed his medical examination, and he was astonished to find that all the details of a famous scene had been borrowed from a medical text book which Duhamel had just studied. In the same way Zola made a literal transcript of a treatise on botany in "La Faute de l'Abbé Mouret."

Zola was skilful in the use that he made of such material, but in endeavouring to obtain an external realism, he neglected the soul.

De Maupassant did not rely on documentation, but he was obsessed by the theory that he must not write a word which did not represent something real, tangible, and visible. The reaction against romanticism was undoubtedly to the good, but the naturalists went wrong in limiting their studies to mere externals.

Duhamel believes that he has hit the right course in maintaining the doctrines of those who insist on reality, but in extending that reality to the soul. One illuminating sentence which he uttered revealed, I thought, the whole of his method of approach: "Anything that does not serve to reveal the human soul should not find any place in a narrative."

The tendency of much French fiction is along the path pointed out by Duhamel. The principle is not new but it has never been so clearly stated as by Duhamel, and he has also laid down with admirable clarity the necessity of steering midway between pure intelligence and pure intuition. One can obtain some understanding of the human soul both by reason and by sensibility. Duhamel prefers to use both, and so avoid the dangers which beset those who follow the example of Maurice Barrès, who is fundamentally intellectual, and those who follow the example of Romain-Rolland, who is essentially emotional.

In these latter years Georges Duhamel has become a European figure, not only on account of his books and his plays which are produced in every country on the Continent, but by his lectures. In Czecho-Slovakia, in Switzerland, in Belgium, in Holland and in England he has helped to make known French literature and French painting.

A frequenter of Paris salons—which disputed the honour of his presence—was André Maurois, or, to give him his real name, Emile Hertzog. A well-groomed man with sleek silvery hair brushed from the middle round a high forehead, heavy-lidded

bright eyes in a hatchet-shaped sensitive face, nose and lips which reveal his race, a short-trimmed moustache, he obtained after the war a double success—his books sold like hot cakes and he won the esteem of the literary world.

He was—and is—a prosperous cloth manufacturer of Elbeuf, and it has been urged against him as a reproach that he has not been unmindful of the commercial side of writing. I cannot understand why this accusation, made by the envious, should be regarded as nullifying his unquestionable skill in painting portraits and interesting us in famous men by a dexterous choice of significant incidents.

Another proof of his triumph as a man of letters is the charge of plagiarism brought against him. Every notable author is charged with plagiarism. In turn Anatole France, Maurice Barrès, Pierre Loti, and Pierre Benoît have, in my recollection, been described as plagiarists. Did Maurois produce the amusing Silences du Colonel Bramble? Then he must have taken his jokes from old copies of Punch! Did he write the life of Shelley in entertaining fashion? Then he must have discovered his facts in the fine work of Dr. Dowden! Was his life of Disraëli read by everybody? Then he had simply summarised the biography of Monypenny and Buckle! When he wrote about Oscar Wilde he had first had the audacity to read Frank Harris. So commented the critics.

Fortunately it did not much matter. After all it is difficult to see how Maurois could neglect to consult the books of his predecessors, and it would have been absurd for him to omit facts and historical sayings because they had been previously given. Still more absurd would it have been to invent. In short, this controversy, though exciting, cannot be taken seriously. Maurois well understands England and the English. Other Frenchmen have understood the English people, but Maurois had the luck to write about them when curiosity was at its height, and he had the ability to write about them with grace and vivacity. If it had not been for the war, he might have stayed in his factory. But he was attached to the British army as an interpreter, and he discerned the difficult British character.

His life of Shelley—Ariel—caught the vogue of the day for revaluations of historic persons, and pictures of them conveyed in a new form, half biography and half novel. Then America called to him, and he spent two months in the United States. I saw him on his return, and he was enthusiastic about all he had seen, though not blind to the defects of the Republic across

the ocean. Doubtless he will yet do for America what he has done for England.

I imagine that the most prolific author in France is Pierre Mille and yet he finds time to see everybody. He lives on the Quai Bourbon, in one of the old houses with wide winding stairways. There is a story that he writes dressed in old hunter's costume, with pointed boots furred with wolf skin. I have never so seen him. He is grizzled and myopic, and he has always a quizzical smile. He has wandered everywhere—in England, in Madagascar, in Senegal, in Sudan, in the Congo, in Palestine, in Syria, in Greece, in Turkey; and he is an authority on colonial life.

Incorrigibly, he tells anecdotes about his contemporaries, but they are always good-humoured. I remember his story of Claude Farrère an excellent novelist of exotic life, who was a candidate for the Académie Française. When he called on Emile Picard, the servant who opened the door, looking at him, exclaimed: "I suppose you have come for the gas."

Chapter XIII

THE TRAGEDY OF A DANCER

ISADORA DUNCAN I seem always to have known. How many years it is since I first saw her dance, and felt that she had brought a revelation to the world, a new sense of plasticity and of rhythm, I cannot count; nor can I count how many years have elapsed since I first heard her speak with rare enthusiasm of her art. The war years came between. Then I received a note inviting me to see her dance again in her house at Bellevue—on the hill just outside Paris. Near by is the Villa des Brillants in which Rodin worked.

It was a fine mansion, that of Bellevue, but its roof was tumbling in. I looked upon it sadly. It seemed to be symbolic of the life of the woman who brought back the Greek ideal of physical beauty to the Western world. There was always something tragic in her art. In her life, in spite of beauty, there was always sorrow. So many hopes unrealised, such apparent futility at the end!

She had returned to her old home after terrible bereavements, after four years of devastating war. Once she was rich, and in Paris, in Berlin, in London—eastwards to her beloved Greece, and westwards to her native America—the mere announcement of her name would fill the largest theatres. She had had unprecedented triumphs. But now she had to begin again, and she was no longer young. She had lost that lightness, that suppleness, those technical accomplishments, which were necessary for the full temperamental expression of herself. The dreadful lines of Yeats rang in her head:

> The years like great black oxen tread the world,
> And I am broken by their passing feet.

Well do I remember the impression of anxiety she produced on me at Bellevue. Afterwards I was to see her joyous again; but then she was melancholy. She alluded to the blow which, before the war, prostrated her. Her two children were in a motor-car crossing a Paris bridge. The car plunged over the parapet and sank like a stone in the river. The two charming children were drowned. I shall not forget the accents of her voice, when she said to me: "I have learned so much in the school of sorrow." She turned a wistful gaze inward on her soul.

During the war she had offered her mansion to the French

Government. It was converted into a hospital. The odour of chloroform, the groans of men, filled the hall where Isadora Duncan had dreamed of having a happy crowd of children learning from her lips her secrets, understanding from her demonstrations the divine significance of the smallest gesture. Now financial difficulties beset her. She was about to lose her Bellevue abode, the home of harmony and of grace; and the mansion which was to have been a School of the Dance was to be taken by the State as a laboratory for scientific research.

Always did she long to perpetuate her art. Nothing can be so individual as the dance; and, when she disappeared, would not the dance, as she conceived it, disappear too?

It had become almost a passion, this desire to leave successors. She has indeed successors, notably Lisa Duncan, but at that time she was fearful. We were in the dim-lit hall that she had devoted to the dance. Once more she appeared before a few friends clad in loose draperies.

There was not a human emotion expressed in immortal music by Chopin, that was not expressed by Isadora Duncan in rhythmic motion. Hope, fear, aspiration, heroism, death, and springing pleasure, all that mankind had felt or will feel, was in the space of two hours wonderfully depicted. But the dominant theme was sadness. At the piano, his fine head thrown back, his fingers tingling with emotion, was Walter Rummel, the most sensitive of Debussy's pupils, who at that time worshipped Isadora Duncan.

And then—suddenly she vanished between the draperies which hung on the walls. She had, for the first time during her fifteen years of public life, turned her ankle. Here was a lamentable hint.

"Ah," she said, smiling a few minutes later to a little group of us, "is this accident not a warning that I must collect around me a group of young girls who will continue to do that which I have tried to do? A stupid physical mishap, and all is ended. The art I have attempted to perfect is lost."

Always this idea of resurrecting the dance, not merely in her own person, but by the formation of a school, persisted, grew more insistent.

"It is not money that is needed," she exclaimed, "it is a miracle." For her situation was not what it was. It was not only the roof which was tumbling in: the whole house of life was coming down upon her.

Such was the true tragedy of Isadora Duncan. After dancing a hymn of joy she wept silently. French artists, poets,

painters, sculptors, musicians, have expressed in glowing terms what they owe to her inspiration. Such men as Carrière, Rodin, and Bourdelle have given their grateful testimony. From Tokio to Tiflis, from Buenos Ayres to Warsaw, her name evokes souvenirs that are at once glorious and pathetic. Now she was struggling hard to pass on her art. The very foyer which she saw in vision peopled by her pupils was going from her. She appeared to be the sport of some ironic destiny.

"If I do not succeed," she told me, "I shall leave the bustling world. I shall retire to a grassy upland of Greece where I may tend my sheep and goats; where I shall be forgotten and where I shall perhaps forget."

A little later she informed me that the school was to be subventioned by the French Government. She hoped to take fifty or a hundred war orphans, to feed and clothe them, to minister to their material needs, and to minister above all to their moral needs. Teaching them harmonious attitudes, the incomparable grace of motion that she had developed to the highest degree, she believed that from this school would radiate influences that would make life more beautiful.

It would be impossible to exaggerate the joy that the decision, which, if I recollect aright, was never carried out for sundry reasons, brought to Isadora Duncan, who conceived herself a veritable missionary, an apostle of aesthetics. The somber drama in which she herself suffered—a new Niobe weeping for her children—the grim horrors of the war which then devastated the world, destroying not only the vineyards and cornfields of France but laying waste the vineyards and cornfields of the human spirit—these things made her almost fanatically determined to perpetuate the dance as she had imagined the dance.

What was her idea of the dance? It should be the noble expression of life in movement. The dance was for her not a divertissement but a religion. She said: "All movements that one might make on the sea shore which are not in harmony with the rhythm of the waves, all movements that one might make in the midmost of a forest which are not in harmony with the swaying of the foliage, all movements that one might dance naked in the sunshine of flat country which are not in harmony with the vibration and the solitude of the landscape, are false: they are a discord across the great lines of nature.

"The dancer must choose the movements which convey force, health, nobility, the languor or the gravity of living things."

Certainly there was no human sentiment, however profound, which she had not translated into an attitude, a movement. She regretted that musicians had not specifically written accompaniments for the dance (I use the word dance in the Duncan sense—there is only too much tango music!). The great masters —Bach, Beethoven, Chopin, Wagner, had, of course, understood the human eurythmy; but they thought in terms of music, not specifically in terms of the dance.

Never did any artist excite so much emotion as Isadora Duncan in France. If the painters, the sculptors, the poets were in raptures, the masses too applauded, awed by the wonderful vision, the vistas they suddenly perceived. . . .

Her project was not merely to pass on her tradition through pupils snatched from the gutters of the squalid towns, but to make in France a Bayreuth of the Dance: a center in which should be studied the true dance and from which should spread a world-wide influence, just as in Bayreuth, the home of Wagnerian opera, the Master's music was heard by pilgrims from the end of the earth.

When she was in Greece on the day that Venizelos was overthrown and the triumph of King Constantine seemed certain, she courageously danced under the balcony of the Greek statesman. The action was understood: she made a stronger appeal to the Greeks than could have been made by a score of speeches.

In America, too, during the war, she made a tour which, while purely artistic, was inevitably propagandist.

In South America the German Ambassador and the German colony presented themselves ostentatiously, because she was interpreting Wagner. She felt herself obliged to remove all misunderstanding by coming forward to make this simple declaration: "I dance Wagner because Wagner is a god. He does not belong to any country. He is above all questions of nationality. There is now only one German whom I know who is admirable: his name is Liebknecht, and he is in prison." Whereupon the German Ambassador left his box, banging the door!

Her public exhibitions after the war chiefly aroused curiosity. I went to the Théâtre des Champs-Elysées—in 1920 I think—with misgiving, feeling that she had surely lost much. But, after seeing her again I concluded that she had gained as well as lost. She was slower, heavier, more deliberate in her movements, and indeed had reduced her movements to a minimum. She employed fewer and fewer gestures, stood stationary in

the center of the stage. She was at times a mere point which held the eye while one listened to the music.

On the other hand, when Isadora Duncan really danced, really endeavoured to interpret the music in plastic art and in flowing line, she showed a richer, riper understanding of the inner impulses of the music. Her art had gained in maturity what it had lost in technical dexterity. In graver mood she was sometimes perfect. She was statuesque and noble. But in her interpretation of joy one was conscious that she lacked mechanical liveliness.

Her Chopin festival undoubtedly showed Isadora Duncan at her best. The dances were so arranged as to evoke symbolic pictures of the dismemberment of Poland, her heroic struggles, and her deliverance from the bonds which bound her so long. From the "Premiere Prélude" to the "Marche Funèbre," from the mazurkas to the rhythmic grace of the valses, the life of the country which has passed through such vicissitudes was suggested and seemed to be symbolic of all life. Isadora Duncan made little attempt to synchronize her motions with the rhythm of the music. She evoked, almost independently of the music, analogous images. The eye and the ear received the same collective general impression.

Isadora Duncan was characteristically daring in introducing her Wagnerian festival to a Paris audience at that time. Wagner was still banned from the French Opéra. Only timidly was he coming back to the concert room.

I have before me my notes of her dancing of "Parsifal." I wrote: "She is, as she must always be, superb; but nevertheless she carries immobility to its limits. For a great part of the time that she occupies the stage she remains almost actionless, lying on the boards covered with a veil. Now though she contrives to hold the audience in a state of expectation, it is impossible to refrain from remarking that she is asking a little too much from the best disposed audience in the world. It is true that she executes the finest movements toward the end, in the march toward the Grail and in the ceremony of the Grail. With all her great gifts, however, it is necessary to remind her that the Greek dance had its roots in popular feeling and popular understanding, and it is putting too great a strain upon her admirers to ask them to be satisfied with witnessing the faint stirring of an arm from time to time.

"In the Venusberg music she aroused much enthusiasm. She cannot, however, be said to be as successful in Wagner interpretation as in Chopin interpretation."

Once more Isadora Duncan disappeared. She was in Russia. We heard stories of her enthusiasm for the Bolshevik revolution. We were told how she had founded a School of the Dance for Russian children. Then we learnt that she had married a Russian poet—Serge Essenine. They came to Paris. The union was unhappy. Since nothing in the life of Isadora Duncan could be private, since she exhibited herself in every mood, every circumstance, the unpleasant episodes which we witnessed or which were related to us were unspeakably sad. Her matrimonial troubles were the talk of all Paris—quarrels in hotels, expulsions, scenes in restaurants . . . Essenine had his brutal moments. They quickly separated. The young poet returned to Petrograd, and at the end of 1925 hung himself in an hotel bedroom. On a table were a few verses which he had written with his blood.

Essenine, who was born in 1895, belonged to a poor peasant family of the province of Riazan. At the age of nine, he composed poems which became popular. At the age of eighteen, the blond-haired peasant with blue eyes, with timid manners, was the idol of the Petrograd literary salons. As a soldier he served in the Imperial Palace Guard. The Empress asked that he should be presented to her.

"Your poems are beautiful, but they are sad."

"They represent the soul of Russia, Your Majesty," replied the poet.

He was soon sent, as a disciplinary measure, to another battalion. He had refused to compose an Ode to the Czar.

The Revolution found in him its predestined singer. He hailed it with delight. He expressed in his verses the choler of the people; he believed that an Earthly Paradise was being built. His illusions soon evaporated, leaving him a prey to a strange inquietude. At Moscow he led an agitated life until Isadora Duncan brought him to France. Again he experienced the terrible reaction of disappointed hopes, and, after his return to Russia, drank deeply in the lowest haunts of Moscow. At the age of thirty he made an end of a life which had brought him only deceptions.

At Paris I saw him elegantly dressed, but his savagery was apparent in his brusque behaviour, in his shrill voice. His humour was uncertain and somber. He was eaten by despair, and his despair quickly gained Isadora, who loved him passionately, but was well aware that their union was doomed to a tragic denouement.

Isadora Duncan's subsequent tour of America was, we heard,

something of a fiasco. She flaunted her Bolshevism on the stage, and a generation which did not understand what she had done for the dance laughed at her heaviness and her exaggerated immobility. Once more we saw her in Paris. She had become poorer. The last of her houses at Neuilly was to go under the hammer. Yet the generosity of Isadora Duncan, her contempt for money, was shown in a remarkable way. From Moscow a despatch was received stating that the estate of Serge Essenine had been awarded to her by a Moscow Court. The estate was valued at 300,000 francs. This money would have been of great service to her, but she immediately announced that she would refuse to take it and she made arrangements to organise a trust fund for the relatives of the poet.

The house at Neuilly, one of the last of her possessions, had been bought by the dancer in 1908 from the painter Gervex. The place was redolent of memories. An artist's studio and the center of a dance cult, it had seen sunshine and shadow, until, a vestige of its former self, it had become a perfume manufacturer's establishment.

Gervex had built it in order that he might have a studio large enough for the execution of a canvas ordered from him by Nicholas II to celebrate his coronation—a work which later was taken to the Grand Palace at St. Petersburg. This studio Isadora Duncan made her "Temple of Art," and there held the elaborate fêtes that marked the period of her most brilliant success in Paris. There came D'Annunzio, Rodin, and most of the artistic and literary personages of the French capital.

The gatherings at the dancer's home continued until 1913. The tragic death of her children brought them to an abrupt close. Mme. Duncan no longer found it possible to live in the Neuilly house. She left it unoccupied until the war, when, at the request of prominent French women, she lent it as a home for war orphans; just as she had donated her place at Bellevue for a hospital. In the confusion attendant upon the bombardment of Paris, the house was opened to peasant refugees from the environs of the city, who moved in with their poor belongings, and lived in the midst of the heavy velvet hangings, the rich brocades, and the delicate silks. Returning to the house the dancer found it completely disarranged and, the state of her finances not permitting rehabilitation, she was forced to rent it.

The seizure of the house she explained, was on account of a debt that originally amounted to 4,000 fr., but which with damage and interest charges grew to 10,000 frs. There were

two mortgages on the house for 120,000 frs. and for 30,000 frs.

But she was not without loyal friends. A meeting was held in the apartment of Miss Rutherford Ireland in the rue du Bac to raise funds to save the building. It was proposed to turn it into the Isadora Duncan Memorial School in which children of all nations should be taught how to live beautiful lives.

Always this obsession of leaving successors! The names of some of those who were present at the meetings which sought to help the dancer should be recorded here. There were the Vicountess Rothermere, The Marquise de la Fraissange, Mme. Georgette Leblanc, (the actress who created the Blue Bird of Maurice Maeterlinck, then her husband) Mlle. Thall Rosalis, Miss Margaret Anderson, Comtesse Monici, Mrs. Keeler, Commendatore Ricci, M. Michel-Georges-Michel, M. Guillot de Saix and Mr. Alfredo Sidés, a young Italian art collector who made a handsome contribution. Bourdelle also offered a piece of statuary to swell the fund. My object in mentioning these matters is to show that, if she was constantly in difficulties, she was never abandoned by many admirers.

At the beginning of 1927 she was at Nice. She was weary and dispirited. But she was still dreaming dreams of her school. Perhaps it would be better to found it on the sunny shores of the blue Mediterranean? Alas! there was to be yet another doleful incident in her tragic life. She had a love affair which was suddenly broken. That evening she invited her friends to dinner. Flowers, lights, poetry, and pleasant conversation filled the salon. Suddenly the guests looked out from the terrace, and there, clad in a chlamyde of gold and a purple peplum, was Isadora Duncan marching towards the sea. They were alarmed. As they watched her in the moonlight they saw her enter the water. Her legs were bare, her arms stretched towards the sky. She marched steadily. The water reached her waist, then her breast; presently she was immersed to her shoulders. It was then that a former British officer rushed to the rescue and arrived just in time to save her. She was carried back and placed upon a Grecian bed, tripods fuming about her. When she recovered she murmured in a melancholy voice:

"It is then written that I shall have other adventures."

For a time she was an habituée of Montparnasse. She lived in a Studio-Hotel in the rue Delambre. The place was inexpensive, but she managed to accumulate debts. The Montparnasse "intellectuals" gathered round her, pleased to be in the company of the great Isadora. Often I saw her sitting on the open-air terraces of the Left bank cafés, a little court

around her. We had occasional conversations, and I gathered that though she was apparently cheerful she was sad at heart. Life's fitful fever was ending.

Sometimes she was the center of stormy scenes. Thus at the moment of the agitation concerning Sacco and Vanzetti, she proclaimed loudly, at the Select Café—an American resort—her opinion of the American authorities. An American journalist who had been wounded in the war and wore a white bandage over one eye—Floyd Gibbons—took up the cudgels for his country. Passions ran high. There were Americans who condemned the attitude of the New England judges and of the Governor who ordered the execution of the Italian anarchists after seven years of uncertainty; and there were others who held that it was important not to yield to foreign clamour, to carry out the law with the utmost rigour.

"This is the crucial test of civilisation," said one of them to me. "If they are not executed Anarchy will sweep the country."

"I am a liberal-minded man," said another, "and if they are really innocent I would give them only life imprisonment."

Along the Boulevards swept the Paris agitators, breaking windows and pillaging. There were ugly demonstrations and the police had its work cut out to disperse the demonstrators.

In view of these high feelings, it was certainly imprudent for Isadora to express her sentiments so strongly on a café terrace. But she could not help it. Whatever one thinks of her political opinions, she was animated by a great feeling of humanity.

William Aspenwall Bradley, the friend of writers and artists in Paris, proposed that she should write her Memoirs. He had, as he confessed to me, some misgivings. Would she really settle down to work? He was agreeably surprised. Day after day she worked on her manuscript, and although she did not carry her Memoirs to the post-war years which are particularly interesting, she never failed to add several pages each day. She wrote her confessions with the utmost frankness, and her book is an absorbing document. She was anxious to receive advances, but whatever money was forthcoming did not last long.

Thus she has told her extraordinary life herself, without reserve and without distortion. If she was not modest about her talents and her triumphs, she did not hide her failures and her misfortunes. In her book are the qualities of her life—extravagance, aspiration, folly, and a burning flame.

"My life has known but two motives—Love and Art—and

often Love destroyed Art, and often the imperious call of Art put a tragic end to Love. For these two there is no accord, but only constant battle."

Half a century ago, she told us, she was born at San Francisco. "A star danced, and under that I was born." She danced before she could walk. But when she endeavoured to display her art, American theatrical managers were not sympathetic to the Greek ideal. They wanted something with skirts and frills and kicks. Her family was poor and could help her little. This is how she recounts her beginnings:

"It was a hot day—regular Chicago weather. I wandered along the street, tired and faint with hunger, when I saw before me one of Marshall Field's big shops. I went in and asked to see the manager, and I was shown into the office, where I found a young man sitting behind a desk. He had a kindly expression and I explained to him that I must have a skirt with frills by the next morning, and that if he would give me credit I could easily pay him from the engagement. I do not know what inspired this young man to comply with my request, but he did so. Years afterwards I met him in the person of the multi-millionaire, Mr. Gordon Selfridge."

The family came to London and Isadora's Greek ideals were further stimulated by the Elgin Marbles. Mrs. Patrick Campbell saw Isadora and her brother Raymond Duncan dancing in the garden of Kensington Square one night.

"An extremely beautiful woman in a large black hat appeared and said, 'Where on earth did you people come from?'

" 'Not from the earth at all,' I replied, 'but from the moon.'

" 'Well,' she said, 'whether from the earth or the moon, you are very sweet; won't you come and see me?' "

She helped them to find work. She helped them to find friendships. Andrew Lang, the writer, G. F. Watts, the painter, Sir Edwin Arnold, the author of the Light of Asia, Austen Dobson, the poet, Charles Hallé, the musician, marvelled at her art. Raymond found his way to Paris and the family followed.

In Paris began her love affairs. Men were, she says, at first too awed by her to proclaim the feelings which she inspired. "Such were my first youthful adventures at the borders of the strange land of Love, which I longed to enter and which was denied to me for many years by this too religious and awe-inspiring effect which I produced upon my lovers—but this last shock had a decided effect upon my emotional nature, turn-

ing all its force towards my Art which gave me joys which Love withheld."

Certainly her love affairs were more interesting and freer than those of other women, but she was entirely self-conscious about them. A true child of nature would not have enumerated, evaluated, considered, reconsidered, and catalogued her lovers. She spares us nothing. She, whose subsequent marriage was so tragic, condemns marital ties . . . She danced in Paris, in Vienna, in Moscow, in Berlin. Often there was a conflict between her and her lovers. One of them, a famous Englishman, said to her in Berlin: "Why don't you stop this? Why do you want to go on the stage and wave your arms about? Why don't you stay at home and sharpen my lead pencils?"

She presented Gordon Craig, the great stage artist, to the Italian actress Eleonora Duse. Duse commissioned him to design the setting for Ibsen's Rosmersholm—a comfortable old-fashioned sitting-room. Instead, he designed an Egyptian temple, with lofty ceilings and huge windows. Eleonora, disconcerted, said: "I see this as a small window. It cannot possibly be a large one."

To which Craig thundered in English, "Tell her I won't have any damned woman interfering with my work!"

Isadora discreetly translated to Eleonora: "He says he admires your opinions, and will do everything to please you."

Then, turning to Craig, she again diplomatically translated Duse's objections as, "Eleonora Duse says, as you are a great genius, she will not make any suggestions on your sketches, but will pass them as they are."

Later, Duse was proud to have discovered "this genius, Gordon Craig."

D'Annunzio was one of her admirers. At the Hôtel Trianon D'Annunzio had a gold-fish which he loved. It was in a wonderful crystal bowl and D'Annunzio used to feed it and talk to it. The gold-fish would agitate its fins and open and shut its mouth as though to answer him.

"One day," writes Isadora, "when I was staying at the Trianon, I said to the maître d'hôtel:

" 'Where is the gold-fish of D'Annunzio?'

" 'Ah, madame, it is a sorrowful story. D'Annunzio went to Italy and told us to take care of it. 'This gold-fish,' he said, 'is so near to my heart. It is a symbol of all my happiness!' And he kept telegraphing: *How is my beloved Adolphus?* One day Adolphus swam a little more slowly round the bowl and ceased to ask for D'Annunzio. I took it and threw it out of the

window. But there came a telegram: *Feel Adolphus is not well.* I wired back: *Adolphus dead. Died last night.* D'Annunzio replied: *Bury him in the garden. Arrange his grave.* So I took a sardine and wrapped it in silver paper and buried it in the garden and I put up a cross: *Here lies Adolphus!* D'Annunzio returned:

" 'Where is the grave of my Adolphus?'

" 'I showed him the grave in the garden and he brought many flowers to it and stood for a long time weeping tears upon it.' "

Antoine Bourdelle, the true successor of Rodin, who held receptions on Sunday mornings in his ateliers in the Impasse du Maine, was attracted by Isadora's art. More than three hundred sketches did he make of her. The first time that he saw her dance, he recalled on one occasion, was on the lawn of the little restaurant of Vélizy, where Rodin was dining with his pupils. It was then that he began his series of sketches.

A few days before the death of her children she was dancing at the Châtelet. Bourdelle had a strange presentiment of disaster. Several times he said: "Is she not tragic! She seems to be dancing before La Mort!" On leaving the theatre he saw the automobile of Isadora, and again he remarked: "What a strange vehicle: it is like a tomb!"

It was this vehicle which fell into the Seine with the two children.

I have before me as I write the photograph of Bourdelle's gigantic Madonna in stone, subsequently erected on an Alsatian peak. The sculptor, who sent it me with his autograph, is shown standing by the side of this monument, which is five times as tall as himself. I may be mistaken, but I find the figure, in its Grecian draperies, curiously reminiscent of Isadora Duncan.

After the accident he went to see her and endeavoured to console her. Death, he said, did not exist. Her children were always there. Bourdelle has always been mystically inclined. Doubtless she was helped by these comforting words, but when she danced, on the day of the burial, Chopin's Marche Funèbre, which was played for her by the Orchestre Colonne, in honour of her children, Paris was horrified. It could not understand that she should express such emotions through the medium of the dance.

Rodin described her dance as "sculpture itself," and a curious circumstance which indicates the connection of the two arts is furnished in the following incident. One evening she was

dancing in her house when she cried: "Here is a dance for Bourdelle." She took exactly the attitude that the sculptor had attributed to the Tragic Muse on the façade of the Théâtre des Champs-Elysées. That work then existed only in the sculptor's studio, and Isadora Duncan had never seen it. The next day he showed it to her, and she was extremely surprised at the resemblance.

One day he asked her if she did not rehearse her dances before her mirror. "Oh, no," she replied, "I dance within myself."

Yvette Guilbert, the most artistic of singers, expressed her indignation that in the later years the dancer was allowed to struggle with financial difficulties. When she gave her last representation at the Mogador the receipts were only about twelve thousand francs.

"That is nothing," said Yvette. "I recently gave a performance at the Salle Gaveau with the actress Dussane. The hall was full. The receipts were thirty thousand francs. When all expenses were paid, there was scarcely four thousand francs of profit."

Yes, Yvette Guilbert was right when she said that the death of Isadora Duncan was opportune. It saved her from the miseries of decadence.

Mary Desty, who had been her friend for many years, who was with her when the painter Eugène Carrière showed her round the Louvre, when the actress Réjane impulsively kissed her, when Mounet-Sully, the finest tragedian of our time, and Clemenceau, and so many others expressed their admiration, was also with her when she was killed in September 1927 at Nice. She has related to her friends how the accident occurred. They had been on an excursion between Juan-les-Pins and the Golfe Juan. They were dining in a little restaurant. There they saw a Bugatti car and Isadora wished to purchase it. An arrangement was made, and a few days later she took her place after dinner in the fatal car. Over her shoulders she had thrown a red shawl with long fringe—such as she habitually wore at Paris. Mary Desty had a presentiment that something was about to happen, and besought her not to ride in the car. She only laughed. She threw a kiss to her friend—"Adieu, I go on a glorious journey." The car started. Isadora Duncan was dead.

Her shawl, which she wore as a cavalier wears his plume, her shawl, floating in the breeze, a symbol of the spirit of the dance, had been caught in a rear wheel. It wrapped itself

around her, a blood red serpent, and broke, in its folds, her spinal column.

From Moscow flew Irma Duncan, whom she had brought up as a child. "She has passed on," cried Irma, "but we must save her Moscow School. It is the only one which remains. I will continue her work. Lunatcharsky has promised to help. There are a hundred children to nourish and to bring up in beauty. Her dream must yet be realised."

Her dream . . . her dancer's dream of joy, of beauty, of immortality.

Chapter XIV

THE HOUSE OF THE FRIENDS OF BOOKS

A PLEASANT picture arises before me when I think of that corner of La Maison des Amis des Livres where I saw Francis Jammes, the poet of simple life, Paul Claudel, the mystical dramatist turned ambassador, André Gide, Jules Romains, and many others who rank high in French literature. Often they read their new works to admiring audiences of literature-lovers—or at least had their works read for them. The most memorable night was that on which we first listened to a reading of James Joyce's Ulysses, then in manuscript. Since then I have often heard Joyce readings—in his house and in my house, by Joyce himself, the most exquisite reader I know. But the supreme recollection of a Joyce reading was that to which a few of us were bidden in Adrienne Monnier's shop.

There came over from England, on one of these evenings, Middleton Murry, then Editor of the Athanaeum, a nervous, alert man, young but already well known. Katherine Mansfield, his wonderful wife, so soon to be cut off in the flower of her youth, was then living at Fontainebleau. In this circle was my friend J. W. N. Sullivan, whose works on Einstein and on Beethoven are equally good. I recall too Stephen Hudson—Sydney Schiff—and his charming lady; they befriended many striving artists and writers, keeping open house for them in their beautiful London home. Stephen Hudson was then past middle age. The frequentation of Marcel Proust and of the group of the rue de l'Odéon fired him to write, and he produced extremely personal work, always progressing, "Prince Hempseed," "Richard Kurt" and "Tony." These two are among the friends one cherishes, though the hurry of events and divergent lots cast in different towns, meant a complete separation of many years.

Portrait after portrait comes back to me as I go over the leaves of these evenings spent under the shadow of the Odéon, as one goes over the leaves of an album. But the portrait of clearest contour is that of the hostess, Adrienne Monnier. She sums up a very definite period of French literature. She is there still in her shop, whose walls are lined with books and portraits, but she played her principal part in the first few years that followed the war. No writer knew precisely where he stood.

The great upheaval had left us, the survivors, lost and bewildered. Most of the men who came together under the banner of Adrienne were no longer quite young. But they were the advance-guard of French literature. They found a friendly roof in La Maison des Amis des Livres, and they plucked up fresh heart. Some of them owe their subsequent success to the counsels and encouragements given them by Adrienne. The younger generation then made her bookshop-salon a place of rendezvous, and from it branched out in different directions. It was the first sympathetic center after the war.

For this reason Adrienne Monnier deserves a conspicuous niche in the Panthéon of contemporary letters. Let me try to describe her: a young girl, grave in appearance, but vivacious in conversation, and already touched by a premature matronliness, plump and round, clad in a long full crinoline skirt of grey wool, falling in pleats to her ankles, pulled in tightly at the waist, the bodice tight-fitting, buttoned up to the throat, where it expands in an ample white collarette. Her face is round and placid but intelligent, at once virginal as that of a nun, and indulgent as that of a mother. Already she had cut her hair, which she powdered so that it was of a dull neutral grey contrasting with the smooth tinted cheeks. She reminded one of a Holbein engraving.

She sat at a little table covered with flowers which again made a contrast with her demure greyness. Enclosing her on all sides were shelves of books in their yellow covers. Over the shelves were pictures on the grey walls. Through the doorway came the sunlight, illuminating a passage which led to the little parlour where we huddled together for the readings.

A veritable animatrice! While she attended to her commerce she would continue to converse with the leading writers of the group. Not only did they seek her advice, but what is much more, they accepted her advice. Those who have since come into their kingdom will admit that to Adrienne Monnier they owe much. She has herself explained the spirit in which she launched her unique enterprise. I translate literally her verses:

Like an ancient nun
Who discovered her vocation,
And who, aided by her companions,
Established her house,
Half farm and half convent,
So have I made my library . . .
Some of my brothers
Have an influence over me;
Their words reassure me,

I work for them,
I forget my own troubles,
I console them too.
The lost traveller
I bring back to the house;
I warm myself at the fire
That I light for him. . . .

The poetry may have escaped from these verses in their English form, but I am chiefly anxious to set down her own conception of her functions. There are so few people who have a mission. Adrienne Monnier discovered her mission, and she is happy in having accomplished it.

Financially, however, she fell on evil days. She had endeavoured to launch a review, Commerce, but there were disagreements. Commerce continues as a quarterly—an admirable specimen of a purely literary review. Then with her own resources she printed, for a whole year, Le Navire d'Argent. I am glad to possess the precious little volumes which she sent me. But the strain was too great. She was working night and day, devoting herself without respite to the cause of letters. And when she made her reckoning, she found that she had not only spent her small fortune but was heavily indebted.

I am certain that had she chosen to make an appeal for funds they would have been forthcoming. She was too proud to do so. There was only one way of escape for her. Bitter as the blow was, she decided to sell by auction the first editions, the autographed copies on fine paper, that had been presented to her by grateful authors.

The less understanding critics were merciless. They called her hard names. Was it not shameful to coin money out of gifts? They overlooked several things. First they were wrong in confounding her case with that of a vulgar speculator in rare editions. It wrung her heart to part with these mementoes —mementoes that she cherished and that she valued more highly than anything in the world. But what else had she to sell? She had lost her money in the cause of literature, and she would pay her debts by sacrificing her literary treasures. Moreover, she asked the permission of every writer who had ever presented her with a special copy of his work before she included that work in the sale catalogue. They all gave that permission, and indeed added to her store, and sent her touching letters that in some sense take the place of the vanished treasures.

As long ago as 1919 I wrote of the bookshop-salon of Adrienne Monnier at the request of Holbrook Jackson in Today, which was carrying on the traditions of the Today of Zangwill

and of Jerome K. Jerome, and whose subsequent disappearance was a genuine loss to English letters. The bookshop-salon, in the development given to it by Adrienne Monnier, was something new. Imagine a lending library, a book-selling establishment, and a literary parlour, rolled into one. You dropped in casually: there was a smiling greeting for you from the pleasant hostess who presided over this drawing-room with the ever-open door; you chatted about the latest publications with which she was *au courant,* and upon the merits of which she possessed a cultivated judgment; you handled the volumes which lined the walls, browsing to your heart's content, and you selected your purchases or your borrowings with the freedom of a man who is in his private library. That alone made the little institution a welcome haven from the turmoil of the Paris streets; but what was infinitely more was that, at all hours of the day, it was the haphazard meeting-place of people like yourself interested in literature or endeavouring to make literature.

All the names repeated in literary conversations figured on the backs of the books which surrounded you; but, better still, the books took human shape and moved and bowed and shook hands with you, and with each other, and congratulated each other and expressed their opinions of each other and sometimes read their works aloud. Too often an author is an impersonal being, shut up in his own book. He is a thing of print and pages. He has buried himself between the boards. In the Bookshop-Salon, moving among the men and women who would otherwise only be books, we were persuaded that these authors exist in another form than that which can be picked up and put down.

For this Bookshop-Salon was the haunt of enthusiasts who, though in the final resort compelled to work and produce in solitude, yet found it good to seek encouragement in company. On some afternoons I have seen the Salon thronged with writers who, having given proof of their quality, such as André Gide, or Valery-Larbaud, were addressed by the others as *Maître;* and others only beginning to express themselves in words, learning the difficult art of saying what they have to say in living language, searching (as all young artists do) for fresh ideas and fresh forms.

They were in this hospitable house, whose whole atmosphere was laden with an indefinable emanation of the intellect, debating, planning, confiding their intentions, their hopes, their ambitions to each other. From the well-stocked shelves—the most excellent embellishment of a salon—came this literary exhala-

tion; from the animated groups, from the hostess herself, eclectic, judicious, but decisive.

We are in the Quartier Latin, an immemorial hive of literary youth: the cradle of every new movement in French literature. Around the corner is the office of a publisher, who every morning writes in vari-coloured chalks on two large blackboard panels a poem and titbits of literary gossip. I wonder if Anglo-Saxon crowds would stop to read golden words of modern poets thus presented to them? Under the arcades of the Odéon, the State-endowed repertory theatre, linger the book-lovers before long rows of shelves. A famous library a few yards away displays examples of sumptuous bindings of classic works, running up in value to thousands of francs a volume. In the tiny street in which the Bookshop-Salon itself is situated, is a house painted in pale blue, where art editions are prepared; and a second-hand book-seller's is next door.

Some of the movements that began in the House of the Friends of Books were hotly disputed. For example, Mlle. Monnier received the first copies of "Dada," printed in Zurich, and lent them to Jean Paulhan. They were read by Louis Aragon, André Breton, Philippe Soupault; and thus Dadaism spread to Paris, and was transformed into Surrealism, and certainly began a revolution in literature. Erik Satie, the father of the new Auteuil School of music, who greatly influenced the so-called Six—Darius Milhaud, Georges Auric, Poulenc, Germaine Taillefer, Arthur Honneger—played his curious "Socrate."

Paul Claudel was absorbed by his diplomatic duties and was a rare visitor, but he should certainly be put in the group of writers of the Bookshop-Salon. The Claudel cult grew; he and Adrienne Monnier were great friends. Afterwards he went as Ambassador to Tokio and was later transferred to Washington. Claudel, courteous, polished, remained somewhat aloof, a trifle timid, in the outspoken and occasionally lively corner that Mlle. Monnier had created. Jules Romains and Valery-Larbaud were great smokers; filling the little room with impenetrable clouds. When Léon-Paul Fargue—always late—entered he would cry in his hearty manner: "Adrienne has set her shop on fire to suggest that somewhere within these walls is a divine spark." Then he too would begin to smoke. Nor was the language of some of the frequenters of the Bookshop-Salon always choice.

In these circles Claudel had his faithful followers, who believed that his obscure plays, written in Biblical versets, were the last word in literature. But it was sometimes necessary to

inform audiences that Claudel was the author of a play, lest they should misjudge it. Thus there was presented a drama at one of the little theatres which was prefaced by a declaration of an actor before the curtain:

"Mesdames et Messieurs, we are about to present an act of an author whose name we must not give, and who in fact has not authorised us to present his piece."

The public in spite of its good will found the long monotonous speeches half sung, half spoken, rather tedious; and began to interrupt. When the curtain fell there was a loud demonstration against the play.

Thereupon the actor reappeared before the curtain and made a more orthodox announcement:

"Mesdames et Messieurs, the piece that we have just presented is the first act of Partage de Midi by Paul Claudel."

Instantly the adverse demonstrations ceased. Applause began. It was contagious, and presently the audience was on its feet cheering vociferously.

It is dangerous when there is a cult for strange works to present them anonymously.

Nevertheless Claudel is a good ambassador and a good poet. He is by no means a minor poet and he is by no means a minor diplomatist. In the art of writing he has won a world-wide reputation and in the art of representing his government abroad he has always been satisfactory. It would be wrong to suppose that he has been helped in his diplomatic career by the quality of poet, and it is difficult to suppose that there is anything in the office of Ambassador which moves a man to poetry. In spite of his personal friendship with Philippe Berthelot, the head of the French Foreign Office, a true lover of literature, promotion came slowly to M. Claudel. Always is there a secret misgiving that a poet, especially a difficult poet like Claudel, is ignorant of more prosaic matters. One uses the word poet in spite of Claudel's preference for what is technically a prose form. He writes in scriptural style, solemn rhythm and mystical content. He has gained an enviable literary situation—that of being the mysterious guardian of a shrine closed to all except a few initiates. He might have written, so far as the public is concerned, in hieroglyphics. His work is hermetic.

He became more and more mystical; and he frankly admits that he considers literature to have nothing to do with life. This kind of literary achievement, however interesting, could hardly assist him in his chosen profession. It is then, in spite

of his poetical dramas, "L'Otage," "Le Pain Dur," "L'Annonce Faite à Marie," that he rose rank by rank from 1893 until his appointment to the United States a year or two ago.

He is a medium-sized man, with fleshy face, broad forehead, sensitive nose and chin, soft eyes, close-trimmed moustache. Twenty years ago he married Mlle. Perrin, daughter of the famous architect. In a country where children are scarce, it is worth noting that he is the father of five children.

He warmly defended his conception of "pure" literature: "As if art can be a reflection of life! Art is the negation of life! Poetry is the negation of life! Its purpose is to realise something of which life gives only fragmentary hints. Life is an album which we may turn over, a collection of themes, the raw material and not the model."

The truculent wit of Léon-Paul Fargue is usually good-humoured, yet its victims are often hurt. Comte E— de B— was to give a musical evening with Les Ludions of Fargue set to music by Erik Satie. At the last minute he decided that the text was rather daring, and he took it upon himself to make a few alterations. Fargue without mincing words informed the Count that he would not tolerate his interference with matters that did not concern him. Thereupon M. de B— sent him a haughty letter, in which it was revealed that spelling was not his strongest suit. Fargue took up his pen and replied as follows: "Monsieur, I am the offended party. I have the choice of arms. I know my orthography. You are dead."

On another occasion he was himself reproached with ignorance. "It is a pity," said an erudite person, "that having so much wit you have so little knowledge." "It is a pity," responded Fargue, "that with so much knowledge you have so little wit."

He told the story of Alfred Jarry, the alcoholic author of the farce Ubu-Roi, which begins with the slightly modified form of a particularly objectionable exclamation. Jarry was invited to dine in a restaurant by admirers whom he scarcely knew. The conversation languished. Jarry pulled a revolver from his pocket, fired at the mirror, and exclaimed, "Now that the *glace* (ice, or glass) is broken, we can begin to talk."

When he was asked what he thought of the novels of X. he replied, "I have no opinion whatever. I do not read them. They resemble too much those of Y."

"Then you do not like the novels of Y?"

"I really cannot say. I do not read them either."

Glancing at La Vie des Abeilles of Maeterlinck in the Book-shop-Salon, he turned to Adrienne Monnier:

"Not bad about the bees, but have you anything of the same kind about cows?"

Asked what he was working at, he answered: "Nothing for the moment. One loses so much time in working."

A party in which Fargue found himself entered a restaurant late. The dinner went fairly well until the dessert. Then the waiter remarked: "There is very little left: there are no tarts, no peaches, no ices, no compotes . . . "

"I suppose," said Fargue, "you will be able to find a bill."

Besides producing poetry, Fargue manufactures stained-glass and ceramics.

The review, Commerce, had Fargue amongst its original editors, but eventually Mlle. Monnier found it too trying to work with him. Valéry-Larbaud one of the other editors was much more accommodating. Larbaud has done great things for English and Spanish literature. He has translated, or caused to be translated, Samuel Butler, Ramon Gomez de la Cerna, Walter Savage Landor, Walt Whitman, and, of course, James Joyce. He is a literary explorer.

I first met him when he gave, in the Maison des Amis des Livres, his famous lecture on Joyce, in December, 1921. Then he declared that, with Ulysses, Ireland had made a triumphal entry into high European literature; and when, amid enthusiastic applause, Joyce, who had been hidden behind a screen, was, much against his will, dragged to the little table, Larbaud embraced him. Joyce blushed and trembled with confusion.

Afterwards I frequently came into contact with him. There was one notable occasion when at Marguery's we gave him a banquet to celebrate the award of the red ribbon of the Legion of Honour to the man who more than any other has induced Frenchmen to look beyond their own frontiers. We bought for him a number of little leaden soldiers, gorgeously painted, and he was as pleased with the gift as a child. One of his hobbies is to collect leaden soldiers. He has thousands of them in the uniforms of all nations and, when he is tired of literary composition, he ranges his soldiers on a huge table, and makes them march against each other, and manoeuvres them in the most classic military style. Some of his battles would be as well worth recording as battles to which long books have been devoted, but though there are many casualties, there is no spilling of blood.

He liked too to find in his friends resemblances to the animals

of the Jardin des Plantes. He would take them to the Paris Zoo and point out behind the bars the portraits of themselves. This he did with humour. Nobody could be vexed, for he insisted that his own heavy face and stockish body were precisely like those of the rhinoceros—Le Capitaine Rhino, as Dumas would say. Larbaud is indeed a deep-chested square-headed man with protruding face, and one could readily accept the rhinoceros as a parody of him. Yet his dark eyes and his powerful chin bespeak intelligence and energy.

Often he was absent from Paris. He wandered about the world and from exotic places sent souvenirs of his travels. From the miniature Republic of San Marino he wrote on the official notepaper of the tiny State describing himself as its poet-laureate. He loved too the anomalous mountain Principality of Andorra, half French, half Spanish. When Larbaud writes from Italy he has green paper, from Luxembourg rose paper, from Spain white paper, and from Paris blue paper. Whatever is whimsical appeals to him.

While the neo-Proustians endeavour to interpret life in terms of themselves, and live in a narrow circle of memories, Larbaud looks out on the wider world. Introspection may be excellent, but there are external things, and it is the business of the artist to survey modern life, of steel and stone, of electrical forces, of many patterned lands, and to relate these phenomena with our complex psychical phenomena. There is poetry in wagons-lits. Travel helps to make the good European.

One of his best books is the Journal of A. O. Barnabooth, which has been translated into English. It is the diary of a very rich young South American who tries to overcome his boredom by travelling. Somewhere in the spaces of Europe is the happiness he seeks. So Florence and Venice and Trieste and Moscow and Copenhagen and London are evoked. "When I examine my existence during these last few months I am astonished. Nothing has happened to me; and yet I asked for adventures; I invited them. Henceforth without ties, absolutely free to do anything, and to go everywhere . . . my wealth and independence seemed to promise a hundred romances, and here is my diary: dreary hours spent in hotels, visits from friends, letters, and at last, at great expense, a miserable intrigue with one of those women that come to you at a nod."

His pictures of travel are vividly brushed in. Thus of Florence, which is filled with foreigners, he has a happy expression:

"On the hills where the corn and the olive trees spread out their gentle green, where San Miniato shows in the dark verdure a many-coloured face, a deep red azure, the Italian sky, dark ultramarine, a sunset for rich amateurs . . . But I could never become a real Florentine. I know that now. People may come to live here from every point of Europe. In spite of all, the Salon of Europe has remained a town of passage, one of the old capitals of the argumentative and liberal middle classes of the nineteenth century."

In Trieste "it is snowing pigeons in the squares"; and again in Venice the pigeons flutter and fall about us: "I ventured out on the piazza of St. Mark's, whence the sun has driven the German, French, and American honeymooners. It is no longer an annexe of Wilmersdorf and Passy. Merely a great Italian provincial town. In the white empty space the pigeons are playing at sending their shadows from the roofs, and catching their folded wings as they touch earth."

I like too his impression of Petersburg, with its wide horizons, its broad river resembling an inlet of the sea, its vast squares and its little pointed paving stones: "Yesterday I went for a long drive in a magnificent droshky: two big black horses with red and silver harness, and reins held by a coachman like a round peg-top in his enormous cloak and little hat, with a fourfold cord of orange silk. We never go at a walk; we leave the world behind us, borne on by two wild beasts. The town expands and reaches out in all directions, and seems to multiply itself; and the river rejoins it, leaves it, goes round it, passes through it, *ad infinitum*.

How should one live? That is the insistent question. Barnabooth finds that money may be a handicap. He wants to get rid of social duties and flatteries. He discovers that mere wanderings do not help. He would like to settle down to a quiet studious existence in a great capital in direct contact with civilisation; but in a peaceful, not an aristocratic neighbourhood. He is anxious not to fritter away his years; yet he knows that it is foolish to force himself to do things which hold no interest for him . . . So Larbaud reveals to us the soul of a rich man in search of himself in this wide and lonely world.

Larbaud who lives on the Montagne Sainte-Geneviève, was born at Vichy and his name appears on the bottles of table-water that come from one of the sources. The Collège Saint-Augustin which he attended was frequented by a cosmopolitan congregation of students, many of them from South America: in "Firmina Marquez" you can find Hispanic influences. Then

he began to travel: he went everywhere. He is an accomplished linguist. His articles for the Nacion of Buenos-Ayres he wrote himself in Spanish, and his articles for a London literary paper in English.

Of his poetry, concerned with the modern craze for travel, the following passage, translated by Eugene Jolas, will give some idea:

Give me your giant noise, your gentle sing-song charm,
Nocturnal roaring through the continent's lighted spaces,
O train de luxe! and the aching rhythms of your music
That sounds along your corridors of golden leather,
While back of lacquered doors, that have heavy copper latches,
The millionaires are slumbering . . .
I wander through your corridors while whistling little songs,
And I follow your tremendous sweep to Vienna, Budapest,
Mixing my voice with your ten thousand voices,
O Harmonica Zug!

Here are the dithyrambics of our age. But if he knows cities and machinery and the immense spaces which are swiftly traversed by trains, he also knows the tremulous landscapes of human souls, and his happily named "Amants, Heureux Amants," and "Enfantines" show that he is a spiritual explorer. His analysis of feminine types is peculiarly acute.

Another well named work is "Ce Vice Impuni, La Lecture," a collection of articles devoted to G. K. Chesterton, H. G. Wells, Arnold Bennett, Francis Thompson, Coventry Patmore, William Ernest Henley, James Stephens, Walt Whitman, and others.

The dialogue is especially a French form, though it is falling into desuetude. There is recorded a conversation between Léon-Paul Fargue and Valery-Larbaud. Fargue recalls the founding of the Centaure, and Larbaud the discovery of Walt Whitman. "We had the impression of having exhausted everything in French literature. At an early age we had found our masters: Laforgue, Corbière, Rimbaud, and Isidore Ducasse. We had accomplished our first exercises in poetry with the Parnassians. Then we had approached the *vers libre* in the wake of Gustave Kahn, Stuart-Merrill, and Francis Viélé-Griffin. Already Claudel, Jammes, and Gide, we had recognised and placed in their rank. Maeterlinck, Jean Moréas, were among our classics. We thought that it was enough for a single nation to have produced so many writers in the space of thirty years; and we turned towards other countries to see if there was not something new or at least something different from that which we knew. It was then that we discovered Walt Whitman. What

horizons were opened by these great verses, freer than those we had heard, in a new tone, a tone of lyrical effusion, quotidian and prophetic."

One of the memorable events in the history of the Odéon group was, I remember, an exhibition of original editions and manuscripts of Whitman. Léon Balzagette admirably translated the American poet into the French language, and the Whitman cult began.

Here, in conclusion, is the beautifully expressed wish of Larbaud:

When I shall have been dead for several years,
And when in the fog the cabs collide
As today (things not having changed)—
May I be a cool hand placed on some brow,
On the brow of someone who hums in his cab
Along Brompton Road, Marylebone, or Holborn,
And observes, while musing about literature,
The high black monuments in the thick and yellow air.
Yes, may I be the thought, obscure and sweet,
That somebody carries secretly in the noise of cities;
The repose of an instant in the wind that blows us,
Lost infants in the turbulent Vanity Fair;
And I hope that someone will place, for my début in eternity,
The simple ornament, on my grave, of a little moss.

Chapter XV

SHAKESPEARE AND COMPANY

Sylvia Beach and James Joyce are inseparably connected. Sylvia Beach, a young American girl, fell into the literary haunts of Paris as from the clouds, became the close friend of Adrienne Monnier, emulated her by opening a bookshop—in the same rue de l'Odéon—and, sharing the admiration of Valéry-Larbaud for Joyce's work, boldly resolved to publish "Ulysses."

I liked her immensely from our first meeting. She had a cultivated taste but she was also eminently practical. In appearance she was almost the opposite of Adrienne Monnier who is all curves and placidity. Sylvia Beach is angular and brisk. Her sharp features are set off by a shock of crimped hair. She dresses in mannish clothes: a man's hat, a man's bow, a velvet jacket, and a skirt of some nondescript drab material. She is gay and alert. Her loyalty is only equalled by her courage.

What courage she required to open the little shop with the quaint sign of Shakespeare and Company in the heart of the Latin Quarter, and to stock it with the latest American and English books! One would have said that she could not have obtained sufficient subscribers to her lending library, and sufficient purchasers of the high priced Anglo-Saxon publications, to have justified the outlay. French books have, in my time, mounted from 3fr.50 to 12 francs—occasionally 15 francs—rarely more. But the cheapest English or American book works out in French money to 60 or 70 francs, and often it is well over 100 francs. Sylvia Beach therefore had to expend considerable sums and it seemed hardly likely that the demand for the relatively expensive Anglo-Saxon publications would be great. The wealthier Anglo-American residents and visitors are not to be found in the Latin Quarter. They are provided for in the rue de Rivoli and in the Avenue de l'Opéra by the admirably managed Brentano's Bookshop—one of the best in the world—Galignani's, which has existed for generations and is still as good as ever, and W. H. Smith's which is controlled by Mr. Pope, well-informed, vigilant, enterprising. These shops, of course, sell everything, old and new, popular and precious; whereas Sylvia Beach's design was to specialise in artistic works, in "worth-while" literature. She was to be, in English, the counterpart of what Adrienne Monnier was in French.

Paris is a wonderful city. Her venture succeeded. Her shop was soon renowned. I may modestly claim to have been a sort of mascot for it, and, as I frequented it, I was facetiously known as Mr. Shakespeare. The local gossipers jocularly pretended to find some resemblance between my physical appearance and the portraits of Shakespeare. Let me take no vanity in this: let me confess that I am bulky, in height and in breadth, and that the unkind designation fastened upon me was that of "a bloated Shakespeare." Oh, that this too too solid flesh would melt! Still, there is nothing like a joke oft-repeated, no matter how poor, to provoke conversation; and this joke was given body by the entrance into the shop one day of a solemn Frenchman apparently totally ignorant of English literature. He had seen the painted portrait on the signboard, and discovering me seated at a little table he approached politely, asking:

"Est-ce que vous êtes M. Shakespeare?"

"No, I am not Mr. Shakespeare" I replied. "I am only one of the Company."

"But the portrait outside then?— it is of M. Company not of M. Shakespeare?"

I referred him to Sylvia Beach whom I presented as Mlle. Shakespeare.

That reminds me of the true Mrs. Shakespeare, who was sometimes to be seen in the shop—the mother of Mrs. Ezra Pound. Ford Madox Ford, keeping up the jest, introduced me to her:

"You cannot have met for centuries—Mrs. Shakespeare—Mr. Shakespeare."

This bookshop was frequented by Havelock Ellis, benevolently-bearded, Francis Viélé-Griffin, the American poet who wrote in French and took part in the Symbolist and other movements of the last generation, Ernest Hemingway then beginning his career, Bob MacAlmon, once of Greenwich Village, Pierre de Lanux, of the League of Nations, many of the American and British publishers, and the motley throngs of Montparnasse . . . Their photographs were pinned on the walls above the bowl of goldfish. In the back parlour there were manuscripts of Walt Whitman—poems scribbled on the backs of envelopes—which had been presented by the good grey poet to the aunt of Sylvia Beach; various editions, original and pirated, of Leaves of Grass; and portraits which she had collected.

Her father was a Princeton clergyman who had lived in Paris. Her mother often visited the strange bookshop. Her sis-

ter, exceptionally pretty, was working in the movies under another name—and incidentally was one of my predecessors in my Raspail studio which was then, as I have already written, a weird apartment with black carpets, black curtains, black hangings, and splashes of bright red paint.

Sylvia Beach must always have enthusiasms. After Walt Whitman came James Joyce. She met him at a party and afterwards he lingered in the meeting-place of French and American writers and artists. He spoke of his work, then unknown, on which he had been engaged for seven years. She introduced him to Valéry-Larbaud. Then she grew more and more interested in "Ulysses," and, as the orthodox publishers declined to issue Joyce's nine-hundred-page volume, she decided that she would step into the breach.

"It is impossible," said Joyce. "You will lose money."

"Nothing is impossible," replied Sylvia Beach with American determination.

"It will not interest the public," returned Joyce.

"It is a masterpiece," declared Miss Beach, "and come what may it must appear."

Joyce was overwhelmed with confusion. He was a modest shrinking man who had gone through tribulations. For years in Italy and in Switzerland this Irish exile had, while struggling to earn a poor livelihood, set down, without respite, without hope, impelled only by his artistic conscience, the pages that were to make up "Ulysses." All that had gone before—his "Dubliners," (short realistic stories) his poems (delicate notations), his "Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man" (in which is foreshadowed his subsequent style)—were merely preparatory exercises for the greater work. They had attracted little attention. How then could the public be expected to accept this unprecedented recital of the doings and thoughts of a single day in the life of his personages? It is true that in the single day was compressed the whole of existence as seen through the eyes of James Joyce. There was nothing too intimate in act, too secret in thought, for him to conceal.

The Little Review of America was prosecuted for printing some fragments of this sincere utterance. Its most characteristic feature, apart from its unexampled frankness, was its use of the monologue intérieur. Joyce does not claim to have invented the monologue intérieur. Job, he reminded me, used the form; and one may add that the soliloquies of Hamlet are in reality the monologue intérieur. In France, more recently, Edouard Dujardin in "Les Lauriers Sont Coupés" had employed

the same device; and Valéry-Larbaud, as Benjamin Crémieux points out, had been fascinated by it. Dorothy Richardson had also adopted such a style in her curious novels. Yet in "Ulysses" Joyce made the monologue intérieur his chief method. When you read a passage of "Ulysses" you can scarcely distinguish between what is passing externally and what is passing internally.

As may be supposed, it was not easy in those days which followed the war to have "Ulysses" set up in France. The printing of an ordinary English book would have presented difficulties, but even printers conversant with English, found James Joyce addicted to idiosyncrasies unauthorised by the dictionary. The proof-reading was an intolerable task. Besides Joyce insisted on making alterations, and seven times the whole volume was recast. The Dijon printer did his best, but the earlier impressions were crammed with errors.

The first edition, "privately printed and published," was restricted to a thousand copies, but the subscriptions came in slowly. There was a conspiracy of silence. For my part, though I could not approve of a great many passages—and still deplore them—I was unable to resist the conviction that "Ulysses" was a production of genius. I wrote to Mr. J. L. Garvin, Editor of the London Observer, telling him of my conviction, but also telling him of passages which would certainly call forth rebukes and cause the book to be banned. Garvin is an unusually broad-minded liberal man, and his reply was an invitation to me to write at length of "Ulysses" in the columns of the Observer. With misgiving, but with a sense of duty, I wrote an article of fifteen hundred words which duly appeared in the Observer. That essay I have reprinted, to settle a point of literary history, in my little volume "Articles de Paris." It is therefore unnecessary to reproduce it here. I did not fail to refer to parts which would be found "unspeakably shocking," but I held that Joyce was a great artist, and that whatever virtue there was in him, whatever value in his work, was there because he would listen to no advice and brook no impertinent discussion. Nobody was entitled to dictate to him how he should express himself or what he should express. An expurgated edition? Not if his labours were to be entirely lost would he consent to cancel half a line. He would rather that nothing were printed than that all were not printed. His mission, as he conceived it, was to depict not merely the fair show of things, but the inner truth; and whether it were dubbed ugly or beautiful, or were a heart-

racking inextricable mixture and mystery of ugliness and beauty, had nothing to do with him as an artist.

Here is one of the most perplexing problems of literature. It is impossible to pronounce upon it without a deep comprehension of life and a vast knowledge of literature. What is the purpose of art? How far should censorship—if censorship should exist at all—be allowed to interfere with the artist? It is a problem not to be solved by purity crusaders, or for that matter by artists themselves.

It is, of course, absurd to suggest that Joyce had pornographic intentions. I have come into closer relations with Joyce than with any other man in Paris, and it is almost ludicrous to be obliged to protest that he is sincere. We must take his work for what it is. Those who read it for its unpleasant passages will quickly grow weary. It requires high culture to appreciate its comic and sublime contrasts, its exposure of the irrelevance and the irreverence of mankind before the great facts. Gross animality and subtle spirituality intermingle. Blasphemy and beauty, poetry and piggishness, jostle each other. But, as I said in my review, one becomes tired of beastliness always breaking in. I asserted that the vulgarity of life was exaggerated, and that Joyce had magnified the mysterious materiality of the universe.

This review, then, was by no means an unreserved eulogy; but it set the ball rolling and the book began to sell. Middleton Murry and Arnold Bennett followed me. Naturally the sporting paper called the "Pink 'Un" roundly condemned "Ulysses." Among my papers I find an article entitled "A Monstrous Book" which appeared in the Evening Standard of London, from which I take a few excerpts:

" 'Ulysses' is the talk of all the places where men congregate who are interested in writing, and this talk has been going on for a month or two. But not till Mr. Sisley Huddleston sent a column about it to London have the references been freely and openly made . . . After the 'Observer' published his review people said: 'Ah, not pornography but a work of art, which may mean something.' Word of 'Ulysses' spread. Subsequently came Mr. Middleton Murry with a 'Ulysses' page in the Nation and Athenaeum, Mr. Arnold Bennett following with a page and a half in the Outlook.

" 'Ulysses' was published in Paris this year by private subscription. It is in English, and the copies were limited to 1000, the price being roughly £3 per copy. Within the present week copies have been sold in London for £5 each, and the price is

rising. In America, where it has been banned, the demand is very keen.

"Bound in blue paper and having the external appearance of a British Blue Book, 'Ulysses' is monstrous in size as well as character. Its pages are about a foot square, and it weighs some pounds avoirdupois.

"Those hearing of it for the first time will ask, What is it all about? Let Mr. Middleton Murry, the leader among the forwards of our younger critics, give the answer. He says it is 'a reflection through life of an individual consciousness.' This reflection is concentrated and crystallised into a day of the existence of three human beings: Stephen Dedalus (the hero of 'The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man,' which also was written by James Joyce) ; Leopold Bloom, a Hungarian Jew by descent, an advertisement canvasser in Dublin; and Bloom's wife, Marion. 'One might almost say,' writes Mr. Murry, 'that all the thoughts and all the experiences of those beings, real or imaginary, from their waking to their sleeping on a spring day in Dublin in 1904, are somehow given by Mr. Joyce.' It may be so of course. If so, the trio had appalling minds.

"As for Bloom and Dedalus, Mr. Murry says 'they become human quintessentialities, realised potencies of the subconscious metaphysical ego.' That means just nothing at all to the ordinary man, but Mr. Murry knows that James Joyce in his accounts of these two choice characters restricts himself in no way as to the use of any word known to the British gutter, and even lower down. Consequently, 'Ulysses' is copiously peppered with words that are heard only where social restraint is disregarded or unknown.

"Frequently the terminology of Mr. James Joyce—hope of the Newest Movement in Letters—is identical with that which rules in the back streets of Port Said or Marseilles. Yet Mr. Murry writes that, in part of 'Ulysses,' Mr. Joyce displays a 'genius of the very highest order, strictly comparable to Goethe or Dostoievsky.' Mr. Murry also says that Mr. Joyce 'acknowledges no social morality, and he completely rejects the claim of social morality to determine what he shall, or shall not, write.' Obviously.

"Now Bennett, of whom the general public know more than about Mr. Middleton Murry. Bennett is intrigued and impressed by the fact that Valery-Larbaud, the great French critic, has an article in La Nouvelle Revue Française on James Joyce. Bennett says he is shaken in his first views about Joyce, because he considers that periodical the finest literary periodical

in the world, and Valery-Larbaud a critic whom it is impossible to ignore.

"Bennett's conclusion is: 'Withal, James Joyce is a very astonishing phenomenon in letters. He is sometimes dazzlingly original. If he does not see life whole he sees its piercingly. His ingenuity is marvellous. He has wit. He has a prodigious humour. He is afraid of naught.' Mr. Bennett adds that if Heaven in its wisdom had not thought fit to deprive Joyce of that basic sagacity and that moral self-domination which alone enables an artist to assemble and control and fully utilise his powers, 'he would have stood a chance of being one of the greatest novelists that ever lived.' "

Joyce's methods, as he described them to me, are interesting. He does not start at the beginning and work to the end. He works over this or that passage, marks it with this or that colour, pigeonholes it on a sort of card index system, and gradually pieces the many passages together.

That he is laborious may be judged from the fact that he spent no fewer than 1,200 hours over a single chapter of a later book which appeared in one of the little magazines of the quarter edited by Eugene Jolas and Elliot Paul—"Transition." "Transition" should, of course, really be spelt with a small "t": that is the mode that was set by Ford who became angry when his "transatlantic review" was spelt with capitals.

"Critics who were most appreciative of 'Ulysses,' " he told me as we talked together one afternoon in his cool quiet study by the Champ de Mars, "are complaining about my new work. They cannot understand it. Therefore they say it is meaningless. Now if it were meaningless it could be written quickly, without thought, without pains, without erudition; but I assure you that these twenty pages now before us cost me twelve hundred hours and an enormous expense of spirit."

He went so far as to learn some Chinese which he considered necessary for certain effects he wished to produce. To make up a new word for thunder, which would really suggest thunder, as thunder is not suggested by the English word, he composed a compound of I forget how many languages, taking a syllable from German, French, Italian, Norwegian, and so forth; and evolving an onomatope. It is possible to ask if it is worth while, but it is not possible to suppose that such work is facile.

The idea of Joyce, as it developed, was that words as we know them are worn out. They are like pieces of money that have become thin and on which the effigy is effaced. So he

invented what is virtually a new language. He telescopes existing words, or gives them a fresh and often humorous twist, and he takes his expressions from every human tongue. Always is he careful of the rhythm. Yet it is not mere sound that he seeks: he packs his phrases full of sense. He declares that the sense is simple, but certainly everybody does not find the score of implications which Joyce tries to put into a single sentence.

I frankly presented the critic's point of view. "If indeed you have a dozen meanings in two words, the result is meaningless to the reader. How can he be expected to know what is in your mind? Thus excess of meaning becomes the same as lack of meaning."

If the later writing of Joyce is read aloud it greatly gains. One realises the sense of strange words. Joyce has an extraordinarily good reading voice, and on the afternoon of which I am speaking he read to me a short passage and then commented upon it. His commentary was illuminating. I have no desire to misrepresent him, but as I remember he would take a phrase such as: "Phœnix culpa," and would then explain. "Now here you have a suggestion of felix culpa—the blessed sin of the early Church fathers—that is to say the downfall of Adam and Eve which brought Christ into the world; and you have the suggestion, not only of the Garden of Eden, but of Phoenix Park in Dublin, and of Irish history with its wrongs and crimes, and you have the eternal way of a man with a maid, and you have . . . " *Tout cela!* as Dr. Mardrus, the French translator of The Thousand and One Nights, constantly exclaims!

All this is excessive, but one was almost convinced when one heard Joyce read in his thin clear voice, with perfect articulation, with musical intonation, with ever-changing mimicry, a passage alternately humorous and poetical. Sylvia Beach caused a gramophone record to be taken of one of these readings.

Padraic Colum, the Irish poet and critic, was present with his wife one day when Joyce read. They were immensely interested. Afterwards Colum gave his interpretation in the "Dial." He told me that he believed James Joyce was revolutionising literature. "He is making an astonishing experiment in language. In giving many meanings to one word, he shows that in our new civilisation nothing is fixed. Joyce is trying to get fluidity into language; he is attempting to express new things.

"The big new thing in literature is contained in Joyce's work, which shows there is more in writing than telling a story.

Joyce is an honest and sincere man, and readers should be patient and wait to see what he does."

I liked Colum, his simple ways, his keen intelligence, his sensitiveness to language; and we had various talks about conditions in America where he spends most of his time. Since I have digressed so often, I will digress again to sum up his impressions of the United States. His chief complaint—if complaint it be—is that in the United States an artist is expected to be efficient and productive. Elsewhere a young artist is scarcely allowed to make a living. It almost tells against him to make a living. In the United States he is bound to make a living. He is not permitted to be a loafer. Public opinion forces him to make good—in a practical manner—prematurely. In Europe the artist can jog along for years on little money and is regarded as "promising." Performance will come later. He is not condemned because he does not succeed at first in becoming economically independent.

"There is a great pressure in the United States against a young man spending years in seeing, thinking, and meditating, which are a necessary preparation for art.

"The United States, on the other hand, is the most hospitable country in the world to art, for nowhere else could a poet like myself go about the country lecturing and reading his verse. But the only persons in America who can live as artists are the rich, and, since they are cut off from the rawness of life, they don't know enough of human experience to be great artists."

That is why American artists like T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound, live in Europe. Colum possesses a dry wit. He was turning over the books in Sylvia Beach's shop when he came upon a beautiful edition of Ezra Pound's Poems on the finest paper. "Hum!" he remarked, "I have just come from Florence where I saw an original edition of Dante's divine poem. Will you believe me, it was nothing like so well presented!"

To return to Joyce: in his home he delighted his friends by accompanying himself on the piano as he sang little satirical music-hall songs of his own composition. There was a skittishly clever song about the opinions of "Mr. Dooley" . . .

His son George at these parties would likewise sing but his contributions were in classical vein. He has a good voice and should make a career in music, but though he was sent to the best masters he was made to sing baritone for more than two years, before it was discovered that he had, like his father, a tenor voice. Joyce reminded me that the famous Jean de Reské

sang for ten years as a baritone before he became one of the world's greatest tenors.

His daughter Lucia, a pretty light-footed girl, had a natural talent for dancing. Mrs. Joyce, a charming motherly Irish woman, did not pretend to understand her husband's work. She liked, however, the Irish idiom which Joyce affected. "Just think," Joyce said, as we sat at dinner in the Trianon Restaurant which he frequented, "she asked me this morning if there was any book in the house which contained a little Irish humour. She overlooked me entirely."

The Trianon Restaurant, at the corner of the Boulevard du Montparnasse and the rue de Rennes, was the nightly meeting-place of Joyce and his friends. He was there treated with great deference. After dinner we would sometimes cross to Lavenue, where he would take a bottle of Vouvray. White wine was his only drink.

His jokes were somewhat naïve—the sort of jokes that a jocular uncle might tell in the family circle. I recall one of them:

"When I was a boy I was sent by my brother to the local library for books. At that time Thomas Hardy was in vogue, and I was asked to bring back his latest work. So I asked for 'Jude the Obscene'."

Is not that precisely the type of anecdote that one can imagine repeated, in season and out of season, in a Dublin household? "Do you know what Jimmy said when I sent him to the library last week? He asked for 'Jude the Obscene'!"

Yet Joyce has a pretty wit on occasion. One evening there was singing in my house an excellent cantatrice, and, just at the moment when her mouth was at its widest, a moth flew in at the open window and made straight for her lips. She stopped suddenly. There was an embarrassed silence. It was broken by the murmur of Joyce: "The desire of the moth for the star!"

Richard Nevinson the famous English artist who frequented my studio was bewailing the lot of the artist. The artist never knew whether he was doing worthy work. He was constantly smitten by doubts. "I wonder," mused Nevinson, probably expecting reassurance, "I wonder whether I am wasting my life."

"You probably are," returned Joyce.

Let it be understood that this reflection was by no means intended to be ill-natured. It was the spontaneous expression

of Joyce's own feelings about himself. Its unexpected frankness made it funny.

Joyce is often extremely timid. His shyness was such that when one day I introduced Joyce as the guest of honour at a gathering of writers and called on him to speak a few words, he rose from his seat, articulated half a word—"Tha"—and promptly sat down again.

To see him at his best one should attend his birthday parties. He invited every year a few persons including myself, Adrienne Monnier, and Sylvia Beach; and there, in this intimate circle, in the midst of his family, he would sometimes let himself go. He has strong family feelings and points with pride to the family portraits—especially to the queer grim portrait of his father. In the early days of poverty, he remarked, what troubled him most was that he could not buy a present for his wife on her birthday.

Legends sprang up about him. He was amused by them and would relate with gusto how journalists recounted that he took a swim in the Seine daily, that he surrounded himself by mirrors when he worked, that he kept his black gloves on when he went to bed. Newspapermen he held in horror. He had good reason. Here is an authentic story of how he was treated by one of the tribe.

It is well known that he suffered greatly from his eyes, and underwent a number of operations. One of them was particularly serious, and he was warned that the chances were even that he would obtain relief or would come out of the clinic totally blind.

On the morning that the operation was to be performed he sat mournfully in his darkened room, trying to summon up courage to go to the clinic. There entered a journalist.

"I have come to see you, Mr. Joyce, before you undergo this serious operation—"

"But I never give interviews."

"It is not an interview that I want. A few lines—"

"But I never write articles."

"Well, listen. It is not exactly an article I want. You can earn two thousand dollars in a few minutes. I am doing a series of real life stories, and I just want you to tell me, with permission to use your name, what it feels like to be going blind!"

In appearance Joyce is a handsome sharp-featured man with a Vandyke beard and a slim figure which is set off to advantage by the white-flannel coat which he usually wears at home. I do not think I have ever seen him wearing a waistcoat.

He was greatly pleased when W. B. Yeats invited him to participate in the fêtes in his native town. After the hostility that his books had aroused in Dublin, he regarded it as a compliment that he should be recognised by the official leader of Irish literature. Yet to Yeats he said, with a curious pride that contrasts with his usual shyness, "You are too old to be influenced by me."

Once I was chosen as arbiter in a quarrel between Joyce and Ford Madox Ford who was then publishing the "transatlantic review." Ford had asked Joyce for some pages of his "work in progress," and Joyce had given him a number of pages. Then Ford was apparently stricken by fear, and, apologising to Joyce, intimated that his review might be stopped by the police in America and England if the Joyce contribution appeared.

Joyce was hurt and it was then suggested that I should be called in as judge. I accepted the rôle; and on the appointed day Joyce came to see me with his manuscript. There was present William Bird, the Paris manager for David Lawrence, a keen admirer of modern literature, who had turned amateur printer, and, on the Ile Saint-Louis, was producing excellently printed books.

Joyce read as only he can read; and I waited in vain for the obscenity and blasphemy which I was warned would be apparent. They were not apparent to me. If they were there, they were carefully concealed. I reported to Ford that whatever impropriety there might be would not be visible to the naked eye of a British or American policeman. So, in due course, the pages appeared, and helped to make the "transatlantic review" a success.

Ford with his blue eyes, blond hair, and drooping moustache, was sometimes annoyed by his supposed likeness to George Moore. That reminds me of the visit which George Moore paid to Sylvia Beach's bookshop. In one window was displayed Joyce's "Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man." On the other side of the doorway were the works of George Moore. " 'Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man,' " mused Moore—"I suppose that is something like my own 'Confessions of a Young Man.' "

The French translation of "Ulysses" was undertaken by a young poet named Auguste Morel, who retired to Belle-Isle, where Sarah Bernhardt lived, to complete his formidable task. Doubtless opinions will differ about Joyce, but it may be well if I set down the opinion of Valéry-Larbaud: "My admiration

for Joyce is such that I do not hesitate to affirm that if one writer among our contemporaries will pass to posterity, that writer will be Joyce."

It is an opinion that, whatever reservations I make about certain phases of his work, I cannot but endorse. It is possible that he has gone to extremes; that his epoch-making volume represents an end rather than a beginning; that imitations, which are numerous, are generally poor; and that the influence which Joyce has on the French and American writers has often produced undesirable fruits; but he has strongly impressed his own generation, and future generations will read him if only in a spirit of curiosity.

Chapter XVI

CAFÉS AND BARS

THE café in France, more than in any other country, is the forcing ground of art and literature. Possibly the café has in some respects a bad influence, for too many writers—and painters too—are content to pass long hours of the day, and even night, in the cafés of Montparnasse and of Montmartre. They fall into habits of indolence, they are content to talk instead of working. They discuss from morning till night, and their discussions bear no fruit.

But there is much to be said for the influence of the café. It has brought together many men who, exchanging their ideas in this public drawing-room, have stimulated each other.

The war undoubtedly dispersed some of the literary and artistic coteries that used to assemble in their leisure hours, and formed schools and started movements, and contributed greatly to the world's stock of ideas and images.

A remarkable café which takes us back to the end of the Nineteenth Century, and reflects the spirit of a Paris that is no more, stands near the Place Clichy, at Montmartre. Its leather-covered benches, its oak panelling, its orchestra, its quiet jacquet-players, but above all its faded frescoes, are of a vanishing age. These wall paintings are by Steinlen and Willette and other Montmartre men. They constitute a panorama of Paris life of the late 'nineties. You see again the horse-omnibuses, the Apache-haunted fortifications, the fashionable Longchamp, the leafy Bois, the Boulevard, the crowded suburbs, the windmills of Montmartre. Here is a gallery of Parisian types, a pictorial comédie Humaine; for Steinlen in particular had a Balzacian sense of character, and had a peculiar sympathy with the misery and vice of the capital contrasting with its luxury and indecent joys. I take this café because it well recalls the old affection which the artists had for these places. They were happy to decorate them: they put some of their best work into the familiar resorts. In my opinion Steinlen, who died in poverty, will hereafter be ranked with Daumier as the delineator of his time.

But let me write here of some of the literary cafés I have known. From Villon to Francis Carco, from Rabelais to Paul Fort, French writers have loved the café, and have therein

sought companionship and inspiration. I can never walk along the Boulevard Saint-Michel without thinking of François Villon, thief, murderer, and poignant singer, in a pot-house surrounded by starvelings and cut-throats. I can never enter a café in the Latin Quarter without thinking of Verlaine, that other vagabond poet, who lived miserably, drinking deeply of the deadly absinthe, sinking lower and lower, and wandering from hospital to prison, and from prison to hospital, where he died wretched, lonely, pathetic. The older men of the Latin Quarter and I used to spend evenings discussing the fate of "poor Lelian." Somehow in spite of his habits, his unpleasant appearance, his quarrelsomeness, his drunkenness, nobody in the retrospect had hard words to say against the most lyrical of poets, who trailed a crowd of admirers from café to café —admirers now including some who bear the brightest names of modern times, and again including the rag-tag and bobtail of nondescript society—who wearied his best friends by his shiftlessness and disgusted his own disciples by his debauches, and yet remained somehow lovable in spite of his faults.

The "Vachette" now a bank at the corner of the Boul 'Mich' and the rue des Ecoles, was the nightly resort of Faguet, the celebrated critic and essayist, whose table was always surrounded by a swarm of young poets seeking his advice and aid. His café discourses will be long remembered. His shrewd observations, his balanced judgments, his receptivity to all the new ideas of the youthful aspirants, his understanding of tendencies of which he could not approve, but towards which he showed an eclectic indulgence, made him a veritable literary king holding his court in a café. He was professor at the Sorbonne, and thus naturally came into contact with all the young life of the Quartier.

François Coppée, whose delicate poems are perhaps too sentimental, but whose charming *contes* are inimitable, was a devotee of the café who went there to find his friends. He was famous, well-to-do, but he preferred to wander away from his own fireside, and to encounter in this public place, at the end of his day's work, his acquaintances; to chat and drink with them, and to forget the cares of authorship. Coppée had his own table. "What a talker he was!" said an old client to me. "He was tender though ironic, and when he talked everybody else was silent. But never did he try to impose upon his modest listeners." When he died the proprietor of his favourite resort christened his café on the Boulevard du Montparnasse by the name of the poet.

A frequenter of cafés was Jean Moréas, whose real name

would fill a line of type. He was a Greek who never learned to speak French without accent, but yet wrote fine poetry and was a master of the French language. Sometimes today when I go into the old Café d'Harcourt, once the chief resort of students Isidore, the garçon who served him with drinks, will tell me stories about Moréas. I wonder how many American and English waiters are thus interested in their literary clients?

Once upon a time the Closerie des Lilas at the corner of the Boulevard du Montparnasse was a guinguette—a country-inn on the route to Fontainebleau. Baudelaire frequented it. My own recollections of it revolve around Paul Fort. Paul Fort is the Prince of Poets. Many years ago a number of newspapers invited their readers to vote for the Frenchman who in their opinion best deserved that title. There is not, as in England, an official Poet Laureate; but public opinion—the opinion, of course, of a limited public—confers the crown of Prince upon the poet who is regarded as superior to his contemporaries. After Stéphane Mallarmé came Léon Dierx, who wrote little but whose relations with writers who believed in his genius caused him to be hailed as the "Prince of us all." Not long after he died, with surprising unanimity, Paul Fort was chosen, with the warm approval of Verhaeren, Maeterlinck, Pierre Louys, Henri de Regnier, Léon Bakst, and Victor Margueritte, to mention but a few of the artists who showered their tributes upon him.

The evenings of the Closerie des Lilas come back to me vividly. The Prince of Poets sat in state on an upholstered bench of the *café;* while around him was his court of writers. It was a formal affair, and it was treated with some solemnity. One spoke of literature with awe. Yet with what vigour were criticisms made and theories advanced! To the drinking of coffee and of bocks, poetry was recited, analysed, and appraised.

Paul Fort was physically fitted to sit in the seat of honour. He is a handsome man holding his head high—black-haired, black-moustached, dressed in black from head to foot—a blackness which was lustrous.

The long succession of his "Ballades Françaises" is distinguished for colour, music, and simplicity which sometimes even touches *naïveté*—a *naïveté,* however, which is in reality calculated and sophisticated.

A few years ago, the novelty of the fashion in which he chooses to print his poems would have been more striking than it is today, when so many typographical experiments are being made. He does not divide his verses into lines; he prints them

as prose. The advantage of this procedure is certainly not apparent, for they are strongly rhythmical and are richly rhymed, and if to the eye they have the air of prose, to the ear they take the construction of verse.

Paul Fort does not in fact depart from the recognized measures, and is as orthodox as well may be. There are no strained effects. He does not pretend, as is the new mode, to write with difficulty and to cramp and torture his words. Everything with him is fluent and free, and goes with a fine careless swing.

To tell the truth, he has perhaps written too fluently and too freely. Even the Anthology of his own verse, which he made himself, is a huge volume, and the number of his "Ballades Françaises" under different titles is almost incredible. He has regarded himself as a poet and nothing but a poet—although a little while ago he was persuaded to tempt his fortune on the stage and wrote a curious play, "Louis XI, Curieux Homme."

While giving the form of prose to all that he has written, Fort has disdained prose. He is the ancient troubadour; in everything there is the old Gallic flavour. He is strongly romantic. In ballad after ballad he proclaims his joy in mountains, forests, plains, and seas. He is not afraid of sentiment, he is not afraid of being happy. "*Chansons pour me Consoler d'être Heureux*" is one of his characteristic titles, and he shows a fondness for marvellous fairy tales.

He celebrates the beauties of France; he loudly shouts his delight in being French; particularly is he proud of the Ile-de-France. He knows his history, too, and sings of kings and queens in a fine romantic spirit. He is as fantastic as he pleases, and appears to find life an eternal masquerade. Love and adventure are his themes, and pride and all passions which are not too tragic.

It may be that all this seems a little out-moded since the War, but there is, nevertheless, much in Paul Fort that will live when some of the reputed little scribblings of today are long dead.

One of my most cherished possessions is the review edited by Paul Fort, which was interrupted only by the war, "*Vers et Prose*." In these green-backed volumes it is truly amazing to find what splendid work was being done by Rémy de Gourmont, by Francis Jammes, by George Duhamel, by Léon-Paul Fargue, by André Suarès, by Maurice Maeterlinck, by Romain Rolland, by Jean Moréas, and by a multitude of others known and unknown now. It was a rich and rare period. Perhaps

it was, on the whole, a little precious. These green-backed reviews somehow remind one of the "Yellow Book."

But Paul Fort goes on, and the place which he will occupy is not inconsiderable. Recently his candidature was proposed for the Académie Française, but it is not easy for the poet of the *café* to become at one stride the poet of the *salon*.

Poetry has not enriched Paul Fort, and his friends have lately brought some pressure to bear on the authorities to find for him a post as curator of some museum or other. It would be a post that would assure an income to him, but that would be practically a sinecure. That is a recognized method of rewarding talent in France. The State—perhaps more than any other State—patronizes the arts and does it openly.

Maeterlinck, who wrote for "Vers et Prose," and who still revisits the glimpses of the Paris lights, was occasionally to be seen at the Closerie des Lilas. He is a stoutish Fleming of medium height, with a large round head, his pink complexion, fresh and boyish, set off by silvery hair and blueish eyes. The features are not well-marked, but in his easy-fitting tweed clothes his personality is unusually attractive. Everybody remembers his American tour which resulted in fiasco. He really thought that, without any knowledge of English, he could read phonetically a written English speech. Of course it was incomprehensible, and even the good manners of American lecture audiences could not survive such a test. . . .

Again I remember his enthusiasm for boxing when Carpentier had taught the French that the manly art could be made entertaining—and lucrative. Maeterlinck then, I suppose, nearly fifty years of age, proclaimed himself a devotee of boxing. He would put on the gloves several times a week and box for an hour or two.

After the success of Georgette Leblanc in the Blue Bird, he fell on comparative silence. But recently he has suddenly revived and has repeated in the Life of the White Ants his triumph of the Life of the Bee and he has renewed his earlier philosophical, though somewhat mystical, speculations. The giants have done their best work after sixty; and doubtless Maeterlinck will go on producing important essays and plays. In any case he is surely one of the most imposing figures in modern Europe—one of the few fit to be compared with Tolstoï.

Lately I heard Georgette Leblanc tell how she played "Macbeth" in the famous Abbaye de Saint-Wandrille in Normandy. The famous Abbey was then rented by the Belgian poet, who

wrote a French version of the Shakespearian play. She was fascinated by the great halls, the ancient cloisters, the Gothic ruins in their framework of verdure; and she adopted the Abbey as a stage-setting for the drama. Many guests were gathered; and they were escorted from room to room by "supers" in the livery of King Duncan; and they saw, from coigns of vantage, the unfolding of the tragedy, looking, as it were, not on a play but on the re-enactment of a real story. From the corridor, for example, the guests watched Lady Macbeth coming, wringing that little hand that not all the perfumes of Arabia could sweeten; under the old rafters they were spectators of the apparition at the banquet; they heard the knocking on the door; they saw the witches in the park; they supped full on horrors. Maeterlinck had pretended to be indifferent to the performance; but in reality he was present in the costume of a "super," and witnessed it all. On another occasion "Pelléas et Mélisande" was produced in similar fashion.

After the war the "Dada" movement was evolved in conversations which were held at the Closerie des Lilas and at other cafés. I knew most of the "Dadas." They were extremely talented. They spent their nights in reading Leibnitz and their afternoons in admiring Charlie Chaplin. But when they appeared in their rôle of Dadas, crying haro on all writers and painters who had preceded them, they were nonsensical, obscene, incorrigible *fumistes*.

It is useless to search for meanings or for tendencies, for there is neither meaning nor direction in Dadaism. The Dadas as individuals may quite possibly achieve worthy works, but these will have nothing to do with Dadaism. As a matter of fact, the members of any literary or artistic school, if they are notable, are notable in themselves and not as members of the school. The Decadents and the Symbolists were good only in so far as they possessed personal ability and not as Decadents and Symbolists. I state this truism because it is necessary to emphasize the distinction between the talent of the Dadas and the foolishness of Dadaism.

Let me describe a night with the Dadas. We met in a little theatre at Montmartre. The spirit of the proceedings may be indicated by the fact that continually the Dadas called us idiots, for having been induced to waste good money on them. If you make fun of the public, they said, the public will like you. If you call the public hard names the public will admire you. If you say absurd and incomprehensible things the public will worship you.

The Dadaistes tried to ascertain how far the public could be taken in. Apparently there is no limit to the credulity of the public. Francis Picabia, a really clever artist in spite of his clowning, in his manifesto declared quite frankly: "You are all dupes (*des poires*). In three months we will sell you, I and my friends, our pictures for a good deal of money." The audience found this witty and not at all abusive. The writers in the French reviews discussed Dadaism seriously, even solemnly, endeavouring to give a definition to this final efflorescence of the human intellect. And the true Dada (though there are undoubtedly Dadas who are themselves dupes, and take themselves gravely) laughed aloud.

In a few months, by dint of repeated stupidities, the Dadas made themselves talked about more than Henri Barbusse, or Zola, or Joseph Conrad, or H. G. Wells, or Arnold Bennett were talked about after many years of conscientious work. Everybody was anxious to know what they were driving at. Their names were on every tongue in French literary circles, and they secured a world-wide fame. Sweet are the uses of advertisement!

Incidentally, they had a good deal of fun.

Tristan Tzara, the literary leader of the movement, is a Rumanian. He invented a Dadaphone. The Dadaphone is an instrument which looks like a coffee mill and emits the same kind of sound. The sound is magnified to a terrifying degree. Standing on the little stage he turned the handle and then cried, "Dada, Dada, Dada," to which the audience replied, "Dada, Dada, Dada."

But there is a Dadaism adapted to the piano. Ribemont-Dessaignes was the chief composer of Dada music. A piece entitled "Pas de la Chicorée Frisée" was played. The recipe for the composition of this kind of music is simple. You bang the same note in the upper octaves many times in succession, at the same time banging a discordant note in the lower octaves with the other hand. Then you jump about at random on the keyboard, returning to the original note. The result is the most dreadful cacophony.

Of the little plays that were presented the best was entitled "The Silent Canary." An eccentric man mounted a high ladder and talked nonsense with a philosophical air, while on the stage a girl proclaimed herself Messalina, and a black man insisted many times that he was Gounod. It was funny just because it was so senseless. Yet my neighbours, who were determined to find some sense in it, assured me that although it was not easy

to put into words the profound significance of such a play, it was veritably an event in the history of the drama. The girl next to me clutched my arm and exclaimed: "One does not know what it signifies but one feels that there is so much behind it." The Dadas reckoned upon this capacity of self-mystification that is in all of us.

The most pretentious of the plays was Tzara's "First Heavenly Adventure of M. Antipyrine." There were eight characters whose costumes were designed by Picabia. The costumes consisted of tubes of cardboard which hid the faces of the actors. The eight players stood in a row and recited in turn meaningless speeches. Lest someone should accuse me of coming to hasty conclusions, I will translate a typical Tzara production:

"The equatorial bite in the bluish rock weighs upon the night intimate scent of ammoniacal cradles the flower is a lamp-post doll listens to the mercury which mounts which shows the windmill holding on the viaduct before yesterday is not the ceramic of the chrysanthemum which turns the head and the cold the hour has sounded in your mouth once more a broken angel which falls . . ."

When it was all over we were once more informed that we were imbeciles and told to get out.

Later came the Surrealists. My attention was first called to them by a tremendous row one evening at the Closerie des Lilas. Chairs hurtled through the air, crockery crashed through the window. It appeared that Madame Rachilde, one of the Directors of the Mercure de France, herself a daring writer, had offended the Surrealists, and she was bitterly attacked during the dinner given to celebrate the return to Paris of the poet Saint-Pol Roux-le-Magnifique. It is a wonderful name, but it was originally plain Paul Roux. He was the hero of a scene many years ago at the Théâtre Libre of Antoine. The large-paunched critic Sarcey was chuckling in his stall at the efforts of the unconventional actors. Suddenly the elongated Roux climbed over the balcony. His legs dangled in space. In a loud voice he announced that if Sarcey did not stop laughing he would let go and fall upon him . . . Now this same Saint-Pol Roux-le-Magnifique, who had long retired from the literary life of Paris, was being fêted. Remarks were made about Rachilde and then the row began. It did not cease until the police separated the combatants.

André Breton, Louis Aragon, Philippe Soupault, were among the leaders. They demand novelty. They are violently opposed to bourgeois conceptions. Marx, Lenin, Freud, and Rimbaud,

make a particular appeal to them. They are aggressive. They are as ready to express their dislikes with fists as with words. Their manifestoes always create an uproar. Their magazine was announced as "the most scandalous review in the world."

At the Vieux-Colombier, poems of Paul Eluard were recited. One would have thought that the Surrealist would have been pleased. Instead he denounced this attempt to introduce his poems to an idiotic public. The Surrealists turned up in numbers and there was a free-for-all fight.

At the Studio des Ursulines, an advanced cinema, where Man Ray's amazing photographs were shown, there was a similar outbreak. Then Maurice Martin du Gard, one of the Directors of the literary sheet, Les Nouvelles Littéraires, was a victim of the Surrealists. They had told him that they would not allow their names to be mentioned in his paper. In spite of this injunction they were mentioned. Therefore the Surrealists armed themselves and burst into his office. In the *bagarre* the office furniture was broken. Again the police were called in. It is dangerous to offend the Surrealists.

They are hysterically explosive against their age. They profess to be tired of "academic rattlebrains, stinking dogmatic imbeciles, sterile critics, and evokers of roaring banalities." Eugène Jolas, who sympathises with their ideas, quotes Breton as follows: "The flight of ideas in insane persons makes a definite appeal to certain instinctive postulates in me. The phenomenon of the automatic dictation may produce astonishing results . . . We accept absolutely nothing. We believe that we are capable of reducing reason and the *faux bon sens*. We feel sympathetic towards revolutionary parties. We do not believe in human progress. We want to support all movements of opposition—violently, at the peril of our lives . . . Time does not exist. I would rather destroy than construct. We insist on a complete revision of artistic values. We exclude all literary talent, and literary quality we consider of secondary importance. We are wrathful against present reality."

There was much more about "abominable terrestrial comfort," about "canailles that encumbers life." The Dalai Lama was informed that the Surrealists are his faithful servants. There was a demand for the erection of the guillotine and a new reign of terror.

Jean Cocteau, who now chiefly lives on the Riviera, and whose activities are multitudinous, is beloved by the Surrealists. He has done everything, always in a challenging manner, always with the hope of "startling the grocers." He has written

incomprehensible poems, incredible plays, startling ballets, and he has produced banal drawings. He discovered Raymond Radiguet, a precocious young man who wrote one interesting book before he was twenty and then prematurely disappeared from the stage of life. Cocteau, slim, elegant, with a dark mobile face lit by kindling eyes, with feverish intensity of speech accompanied by eloquent gesticulation, turned Catholic. But somehow one still thinks of him in connection with the cafés—or rather bars and cabarets which were named after his ballets and poems.

The whole difference between the pre-war spirit and the post-war spirit is somehow summed up in the difference between the pre-war café and the post-war bar.

Cocteau explained that he merely welcomed jazz when, soon after the war, it was introduced to Paris, and it amused him to play in a little bar in the rue Duphot. His friends, musicians and writers, came. Soon ultra-smart people attended in throngs. Cocteau himself beat the drum. Vance, the negro saxophonist, made weird noises. Jean Wiéner, the pianist, and the composers Stravinsky, Arthur Honegger, Darius Milhaud, Georges Auric, Francis Poulenc, Marcelle Mayer, and Erik Satie, contributed to the concerts. The proprietor bought a place in the rue Boissy d'Anglas which he named Le Boeuf sur le Toit. There were subsequently other bars called Parade, Le Potomak, and Le Grand Ecart.

I must now tell the perhaps forgotten story of Le Boeuf sur le Toit—the Ox on the Roof. Near the Bourse lived an eccentric man who kept birds and small beasts on the balcony of his apartment. The neighbours complained. Particularly did they object to the droppings of the animals. They invoked the law. Thereupon, knowing the delays of the law in France, he brought a young ox into his apartment. The law-suit went on. The ox grew. When finally the case went against him, he told the authorities to come and take the beast away. But it was impossible. The ox had become so big and fat that it could be got out neither by the door nor by the window!

In spite of Cocteau's disclaimer I picture him perched on a tall stool at a cocktail bar. Even when he is most serious, one associates him with cocktail wit and the humour of the jazz.

But one must not do him an injustice: in reality Jean Cocteau is a young man about whom innumerable fictions have been woven. Every bright saying of recent years has been attributed to him. Yet, although he is in fact retiring, and is not to be found here, there, and everywhere, he produces an im-

pression of ubiquity. In smart literary or theatrical circles one is sure to be told the latest Cocteau witticism.

Perhaps nobody represents the thin factitious smartness of the age better than Cocteau. Many of his so-called epigrams are empty. He had the misfortune of being hailed as a genius when he was still a schoolboy, and he has since been persecuted by the charge.

Nevertheless he is a sincere worker, and it is a pity that his talent has been diverted into queer ways. Perhaps he is still in the experimental stage. He endeavours to make everything that he writes different from everything else that he has written. It cannot be said that he succeeds, for the Cocteau style remains the Cocteau style, no matter what form he gives to his compositions. His poems, with their strange far-fetched images; his stories, with their excessive ellipses; his ballets, with their incomprehensible jokes; his plays in which he tries to reduce everything to the bare bones; his essays which are made up of a succession of apothegms—all have a family resemblance, and it is only superficially that his manner changes.

Cocteau, like many of the men in France today, has a horror of the commonplace. He is afraid of anything hackneyed, he is perpetually in search of something new. This search for something new appears to me to be the curse of our age. Whatever is new in style or in substance will be found without conscious searching. The moment newness is made an end in itself you have bad art.

It goes without saying, therefore, that I find the method and the matter of Cocteau full of faults, but this does not imply that Cocteau is without merits. On the contrary, he is often brilliant, and if ever he finishes serving his apprenticeship, will have to be reckoned with. Indeed he must already be reckoned with, for he has an enormous influence upon the literary youth of France.

A generation ago in France M. Antoine effected a revolution in the theatre; he introduced realism. His purpose was to give the illusion of life. Unfortunately he pushed things far too far; scenery became more and more real, and therefore produced a fainter and fainter idea of the truth.

There was a reaction against this false realism, and Jacques Copeau, Firmin Gémier, Dullin and others abandoned elaborate scenery for sketchy representations, striking images which would convey more strongly a suggestion of reality than reality itself.

But Cocteau surely, with his "Roméo et Juliette," and

"Orphée" and "Antigone" carried this salutary reaction to the point of absurdity. Throughout the Romeo play we looked upon a dark blue curtain strewn with stars; against this background the scene-shifters simply placed blackboards on which the most summary designs in red, blue or white lines were painted. These mere lines were intended to represent the place in which the action passes. There were drawn, for example, the doorways of the rival houses of Capulet and Montague. For the famous balcony scene a few scrawls on the blackboard sufficed.

There is something to be said in principle for thus reducing scenery to its essentials, but in practice much discretion ought to be exercised. Moreover Cocteau, in re-writing Shakespeare or Sophocles, simplified the language in precisely the same way as he simplified the scenery. There is lacking the sensation of multitudinous humanity, of complexity and fertility.

When Jean Cocteau treated the "Antigone" of Sophocles in this manner, he had perhaps more justification, for the suppression of parts of the Greek Drama which do not in our day offer a veritable interest may be held to be an improvement. But you cannot take away the picturesque and human element from Shakespeare without spoiling the whole conception. The characters as presented by Cocteau move rhythmically almost as in a ballet. Something can be done along these lines to make acting much more rhythmic than it is today, but for the moment it must be confessed that Cocteau is experimenting, and that his experiments are not successful.

It is in the ballet that Cocteau excels. His absurdities there become really amusing. In "Les Mariés de la Tour Eiffel," for example, he gave us a *tour de force* that was excruciatingly comic. A grotesque wedding party was shown on various platforms of the Eiffel Tower, and the fun consisted in altogether unexpected associations of thought. The inevitable photographer warns us as is customary to attract our attention that a bird is about to emerge from his camera. This conventional bird Cocteau magnifies into an ostrich. It does not appear. It is lost. Deprived of the bird which is supposed to reside in the photographic apparatus, he is therefore unable to obtain his pictures. It sounds extremely silly, but just because of its extreme silliness the search for the ostrich is remarkably amusing.

Still it cannot be pretended, as the friends of Cocteau pretend, that there is some kind of profound significance hidden in this *jeu d'esprit*. It is good nonsense, and one may find fooling to be admirable without regarding it as on the topmost pinnacle of art.

Chapter XVII

BOULEVARDS, LA BUTTE, LATIN QUARTER

Let us enter the cafés about the boulevards. Many of the older establishments have gone—La Maison Dorée, Le Café Riche, Le Tortoni, Le Café Anglais, and so forth. There still exists Weber, crowded with actors and deputies, in the rue Royale. There still exists the cosmopolitan Café de la Paix. More interesting in its memories for me is the Napolitain where I and my companions once had a table reserved for us. It is filled with memories of Ernest La Jeunesse, brimming over with malice, Catulle Mendès, with his wealth of stories, Jehan Rictus, the poet of poverty . . . Sometimes an old man would speak of Barbey d'Aurevilly, Théodore de Banville, Halévy, Alexandre Dumas fils . . . In my time it was the resort of actors, playwrights, critics; and revisiting it the other day I observed Paul Souday, the panjandrum of letters who lays down the law in the Temps, keeping up the traditions of Georges Feydeau, the amusing vaudevilliste, and of Aurélien Scholl, the wit of the Boulevard. There was Henri Duvernois, the inimitable story-teller, and Rip, the favourite revuiste.

When the old proprietor left, many of us who had frequented the Napolitain went to a quieter café—chez Raoul—opposite the Opéra Comique. There was Georges de la Fouchardière, whose contributions to L'Oeuvre are a daily joy, and Noël Garnier, a poet who won the highest honours on the battlefields which were subsequently taken away from him because he broke out into vituperations against the authorities, and Francis Carco, whose knowledge of the low life of Paris is unequalled, and Henri Béraud, the cleanest writer in France today, and a crowd of others.

Never did I feel so much at home in Paris as in this place, which, in its turn, has changed. Béraud was perhaps the most remarkable member of the company. He wields, in my opinion, the most vigorous pen in France. He has done everything. He helped his father who was a baker at Lyons. He decorated tissues. He was the clerk of a notary, an insurance agent, a singer, a dealer in antiquities, a wine merchant, a journalist, a critic, a novelist, and above all a polemist. He was a champion runner, a champion swordsman, a champion footballer. Now he is among the popular authors of France. It may be that his

unusual bulk has helped to fix him in the public mind; for success has often little to do with merit—though in his case it is deserved—and usually is determined by some irrelevant but picturesque fact.

It is always wrong to assume that the author is the hero of his own works, but, physically at any rate, Henri Béraud has described himself in "The Sorrows of a Fat Man." Henri Béraud is the French G. K. Chesterton. In spite of his rotundity he is the most vigorous debater that France has known since the days of Henri Rochefort. He gives his opponents no quarter. He is by no means comfortable and indulgent and tolerant as fat men are popularly supposed to be. When Cervantes drew his deathless portrait of Don Quixote, he depicted Don Quixote thin as a rake and Sancho Panza round like a tub; but in real life it is often your men who are round like tubs who make themselves knights-errant and who go in pursuit of injustice and folly wherever it may be found.

Henri Béraud possesses the spirit of Don Quixote in the body of Sancho Panza.

Recently he found himself, like D'Artagnan, with three duels on his hands in one day. Happily, the period when, in France, the writer was obliged to keep his sword sharper and mightier than his pen is past, and friends intervened to prevent actual bloodshed.

Béraud seeks quarrels as the gallant adventurers of Dumas sought quarrels. In spite of his aggressive demeanour, one feels that here is a sincere and honest man. He hits as hard as he can, but he means no harm. It is all good lively scrapping without any ill-will.

He does not disdain the title of journalist because he has written books. Excellent books they are, which have won the Prix Goncourt. But he cannot permit himself to be imprisoned between the covers of a book; he scatters himself at large; he touches life at all points; he writes everywhere and on everything.

There is an eternal dispute between the journalist and the author. The author who produces, in a thin trickle of words, one poor book a year is inclined to look with some contempt on the journalist who is too impatient, too full of energy, to content himself with a small output. All the greatest writers of the world have produced enormously. They have had, as it were, the rage, the carelessness, the vigour of the journalist. It is the second-rate men who have daintily turned their phrases and have spent much time upon the precise placing of commas.

For me the true type of the writing man has always been Balzac. It would, of course, be imprudent to compare anyone of our day with Balzac, but, quality apart, Béraud, like Balzac, is, as the French say, a force of nature.

Béraud was an acute dramatic critic. Frequently I met him at first nights, and he had always something just to say of the play that nobody else had thought of saying, but which nevertheless went to the heart of the matter. When he praised it was praise indeed, but when he slaughtered you could see the feathers fly.

His distractions are "the pipe, polemics, a nocturnal life, taxis, and literary banquets."

Henri Béraud stands for something of which modern French literature had great need. With due respect for André Gide and the school of the Nouvelle Revue Française, it was indeed time that there was a reaction. There had sprung up a dull pseudo-philosophical style of writing, precious and bloodless. It was, of course, no more correct than the more straightforward, downright kind of writing, but it gave itself airs of superiority.

Perhaps the best-known of the literary quarrels in which Béraud threw himself with characteristic impetuosity was his quarrel with the pretentious men of letters who had never taken contact with real life, and who had developed what Béraud calls the "*snobisme de l'ennui.*"

"If some of the purists," says Henri Béraud, "would only become journalists, they would realize that it is in life itself that the material of letters is to be found, and not in the libraries." The significance of Béraud is that in season and out of season he preaches this important truth that certain writers in France are in danger of forgetting.

There are altogether too many "little chapels," societies of mutual admiration, in French literature, and it is altogether good that Béraud should have blown in his rude manner in upon the self-satisfied little schools.

Closely associated with Henri Béraud was Pierre Benoît who lived near the Luxembourg Gardens—in the rue d'Assas. He belonged to a group of men who decided to stick together, to help each other along, and in fact all the members of this group have succeeded. There has recently been a good deal of railing against Pierre Benoît, because he has been too successful for some of his rivals, and envy is mingled with their admiration. There is a fallacious belief that if a writer becomes a "best seller" he cannot be regarded seriously. Pierre Benoît is a "best

seller." His novels, besides attaining a fabulous circulation, are filmed, and hundreds of thousands who have never read his romances can see them depicted for a few francs in the cinemas.

Such success is hardly to be forgiven. He is also condemned because he is a magnificent tale-teller. He is far and away the best narrator in France. He is old-fashioned enough to think that the chief business of the writer of fiction is to relate an interesting story. There are those who despise the art of recounting adventures. I am not ashamed to confess myself a devotee of Dumas and I cannot understand why the tale-teller should be despised. The psychological novel has its place, but it is not necessarily a higher place than the novel of incident. It may well be that, all things being equal, a story in which there is a remarkable feeling for character and for psychology should be ranked above the novel of adventure, but speaking generally, the faculty of telling a straightforward tale is rarer than the faculty of dabbling in a little facile psychology.

In their way, the romances of Benoît are unsurpassed, nor are they lacking in those very qualities which it is now customary to regard as the essential qualities of the writer of fiction.

Probably the finest thing that Pierre Benoît has yet done is his first story, "Koenigsmarck." Its construction is clever, and the atmosphere of romantic mystery in a German Court is created with a sureness that is superb.

"Koenigsmarck," however, did not bring to its author the fame that was brought by "L'Atlantide," which must also be considered to be a perfect example of a book that is meant to entertain.

Pierre Benoît has, consciously or unconsciously, always drawn upon himself the attention of the journals. "L'Atlantide" became so well known largely because of the accusation which was brought by a professor of literature that it was a mere copy of Rider Haggard's "She."

Nothing is easier than to discover resemblances between two books, and to launch charges of plagiarism. But I confess that, after a careful examination of "She" and of "L'Atlantide," I found it impossible to discover the smallest foundation for the accusation. Apart from the fact that both the French and the English writer deal with the legend that somewhere in the heart of Africa a white woman, surpassingly beautiful, rules over a kingdom—a theme which is ancient and belongs to anybody who cares to appropriate it—there is nothing in the style or in

the conduct of the story or in the incidents which is common to the two authors.

The Frenchman revealed his sources, and protested that he had never read "She" which, at that time, had not been translated into French. It would be absurd not to believe him, but the indignation which was expressed both by the partisans of Sir Rider Haggard and of Pierre Benoît was no less absurd.

Pierre Benoît should have been the last man in the world to complain, for he obtained an advertisement that every writer would have desired. "L'Atlantide" ran into edition after edition.

At that time Benoît was still employed at the Quai d'Orsay, but afterwards he cut himself adrift.

In view of what subsequently happened, there seemed some justification for the suggestions which were made by suspicious confrères that he had helped to launch the charge against himself. He is known as a practical joker, and among his lively exploits was that of obtaining the support of a number of distinguished persons for the projected publication of the complete works of a writer who, he proclaimed, had been forgotten. He had been forgotten for the excellent reason that he had never existed, but nevertheless there were many wiseacres who agreed that it was a shame that his complete works had never been published.

In raising this laugh, Pierre Benoît was indeed a plagiarist, for some time before the war another practical joker obtained the public support of many public men for the erection of a monument to Hégésippe Simon, a philosopher who was equally imaginary.

A little while later one of Pierre Benoît's jokes was carried too far. He disappeared for some days, and a wild story was circulated that he had been kidnapped by Sinn Feiners because he had written a book about modern Ireland entitled "La Chaussée des Géants" (The Giant's Causeway). The details of his strange adventure were published on the front page of the Paris newspapers—and melodramatic details they were.

"Pour Don Carlos" is another of his colourful yarns, while "Le Lac Salé," the scene of which is laid in Salt Lake City, gave him a further opportunity of playing a trick on the critics who had begun to attack him on account of his style. He transcribed a page of Victor Hugo and worked it into his story, hoping that the critics would point to it as an example of bad writing. They did. There was again a tremendous uproar, but my sympathies on this occasion were, like the sympathies of most of his readers, with Pierre Benoît.

Finally he confounded them all by producing a magnificent story in which hardly anything occurs. He wished to show that he, too, could give us a psychological study.

"Mademoiselle de la Ferté" is a grim piece of work, in which the central character is strongly painted. The theme is the slow vengeance of a woman whose fiancé was snatched from her, thus condemning her to a life of celibacy.

In this vein, too, Pierre Benoît might excel, but for my part I hope he will return to the romance of adventure. There are a number of writers who could produce "Mademoiselle de la Ferté," but there are few who could produce "Koenigsmarck."

To meet Francis Carco in the café it was better to climb the hill of Montmartre. There I have frequented, at different times, many of the haunts which he describes. There is the Place du Tertre, a patch of unpaved ground with a few stone benches and trees. About it are ancient buildings, yellow and grey, in twining and declivitous streets. The cafés and restaurants have bare scrubbed tables. There is a tobacco shop of the Père Lemoine, the Clairon des Chasseurs, the unforgettable restaurant of Bouscarat. In the picturesque rue des Saules are melancholy willows through which shines the dim light of gas lamps.

The true Montmartre is perched upon the heights, a quiet out-of-the-way village, to which few people climb. When you enter it you leave behind you all the factitious pleasure of the tourist's Montmartre. You have stepped into another world. Everything is so peaceful. In the perpetual clamour of Paris one is painfully conscious of the hubbub. Here one becomes conscious of the silence. Montmartre might be many miles from any town; not a sound from the millions of throats, not an echo of the ceaseless whirling wheels, ascends to the hill. Or stay—I have not been there lately and sad stories reach me of tourists having discovered La Butte.

In any case Montmartre, the true, the old Montmartre, was completely cut off from the city. When its joyous citizens demanded that it should be made a "commune libre," an independent entity, they asked for something which in reality they already enjoyed. There are more steps to mount than I can number if one would reach this little town. It nestles, inaccessible to the average Parisian, under the shadow of the Sacré-Coeur, that huge church whose white basilica built in the clouds dominates the swarming hive below.

Imagine, then, a happy little community as insulated from Paris as it is possible for a people who are so near the bustling streets to be. Everything is different. The houses are low, some-

times one-storey houses, in strange contrast with the skyscrapers in which the Parisian is stacked. The buildings have a tumble-down air: they are old. The streets are narrow, twisting, and steep. They are roughly paved with cobble-stones. There are great pieces of waste-land on which grows grass and where dogs and children disport themselves. "Terrain à vendre"—let us hope that these open spaces will not be sold just yet. The inhabitants of the Butte resent the intrusion of the stranger—they are a happy family—and the few smart villas, such as one encounters at the seaside, which have been put up, are out of character and keeping with the old-world place.

My own memories of Montmartre concentrate in the Lapin Agile. It is a broken-down shanty. Once it was called the Cabaret des Assassins. One may roughly translate its present name as The Skittish Rabbit. But in reality it should be the Lapin à Gill—in reference to the rabbit which Gill, the caricaturist, who was once the owner of the little maison de campagne, before the builder had made modern Montmartre, painted on the door.

Frédé is the present host, and he somehow got round him the liveliest, wittiest painters and writers of Paris, who were always up to some new trick. The Lapin Agile was more amusing than the old Chat Noir in the days of Salis. Famous as this tiny place has grown, it is not altogether spoilt. Its *habitués* are still the true Montmartrois who are just amusing themselves. They drink beer and munch plums soaked in eau-de-vie, and listen to each other's poems and songs. A dog sleeps in the middle of the floor, only wakening at the end of each contribution to bark loudly by way of applause. In the decaying walls of the Lapin Agile, the conspirators seated on bottomless stools and boxes which served as chairs, planned all the farces at which Paris used to chuckle.

Frédé, the old man with long grey beard, fur cap, and red muffler, served drinks and demanded recitations. Sometimes he would take up his guitar and would sing a chanson of Béranger:

Combien je regrette
Mon bras si dodu,
Ma jambe bien faite
Et le temps perdu!

There round the big table poets and painters would stay until the dawn. The legend goes that Picasso first proclaimed his faith in Cubism here. Pierre MacOrlan was the captain of the merry crew. His clothes reminded one of something between a cowboy and a pirate. MacOrlan has since written highly col-

oured romances. Guillaume Apollinaire invented wild jokes over which he roared. André Salmon, the art critic, spent his youthful nights in the cabaret. Poulbot, who has drawn inimitable sketches of the Montmartre urchin, and Utrillo, and Jules Dépaquit, the draughtsman who was the first Mayor of the Free Commune of Montmartre, were among the Bohemians of the Butte. Then there was Max Jacob, of extraordinary talent, who was afterwards converted to Catholicism and went to live in a monastery. There was Roland Dorgelès, the author of Les Croix de Bois. There was Gaston Couté, the Beauceron poet, whose successor is Maurice Hallé.

There were mock elections of a Mayor and Corporation. The parties were Dadaists, Cubists, Sauvagists; but from the outset it was clear that the Anti-Skyscrapers would win, not only because they had the best program but also the only organ, *La Vache En-ragée* (The Angry Cow), which did not blush to record the most amazing lies about its opponents and related glowing Munchausen accounts of meetings attended by tens of thousands of voters in little *salles* where a hundred could hardly find room. Naturally, when the fateful day of the polling had passed we were informed that this party had obtained 50,000 odd suffrages, while the others had one or two votes.

The comedy, of course, would have been nothing had it not been for the high-spirited manner in which this mock election was conducted. So it was with the erection of a comic statue, head downwards, feet in the air, to an imaginary philosopher with a high-sounding name.

Particularly do I recall Francis Carco. He was in his early days poor like most of the others. His fame chiefly depends on his profound knowledge of the life of the Apache and his understanding of those who are in revolt against their environment. He does not describe what he has not seen. He spent his days among the outcasts, men and women, and he is fond of returning to the unhappy scenes. There is much in Carco which reminds me of Villon whose history he has cunningly reconstructed.

A whole literature is now devoted to the life of those unfortunate beings who live usually in Belleville, Ménilmontant, and on the outskirts of the city. Formerly they ranged in bands. The Apache has today largely disappeared; he still exists, but he is very much rarer than in the days of Aristide Bruant, the chansonnier, who may properly be said to have first written of the miseries and somber heroisms of a class which is happily being swept away by civilisation. For the Apache was a product

of oppression and poverty. There was for the poorly paid worker no possibility of establishing a real home; his children were brought up in the streets, they were ill fed. Around them there was nothing which could guide them aright; they became enemies of society and quickly learned to use the knife. Human life became for them a thing of no account. They had their own peculiar code of morals, and they were in their fashion well-disciplined and extremely loyal.

This life Carco knows as few Frenchmen, who are capable of expressing themselves, know it. But Carco has not permitted himself to stick to a single *genre*. In a recent book—Verotchka l'Etrangère—he described the life of the Russians in Paris. Like everything that he writes it is full of pity; pity is the keynote of Carco. If his style is realist he nevertheless manages to impregnate it with romance. He is, as it were, a realist poet of Paris, and he describes the various manifestations of the life of the French capital in unforgettable pages. Montmartre he knows especially well, and some of the scenes in "Jésus la Caille"—a book which appeared before the war—cast in the steep and lively rue Lépic, linger in the memory.

Still, his earlier books were merely studies, and Carco has since made remarkable progress. He has, it must be added, been helped by the friendship of Paul Bourget, the greatest of living French psychological novelists. Bourget suggested to Carco the subject of his book "Rien qu'une Femme" (Only a Woman) and has assisted him in many ways. It was owing to the advocacy of Bourget that Francis Carco obtained, two years ago, the Prix de Roman of the Académie Française.

Carco himself explained his conception of the novel. "It should always," he says, "be close to life. It must be in part a confession. I wander in the street and I there find the matter of my books. First I am interested in the externals of things, and afterwards I endeavour to penetrate to their soul. The greatest stumbling-block for the young writer is, in my opinion, description. Description should not be done for itself: it should reflect the state of spirit, the movement of the romance."

This rule Carco has followed, and it will be observed in all his work that his descriptions of the Seine, of the narrow rues, of the weather, and so forth, have their special significance and help to carry the story to its climax.

He confesses to three masters among the older men—Bourget, Pierre Loti and Maurice Barrès. In addition he has been influenced by the Russians, notably by Dostoievsky, and by German literature.

What he likes above all is the sharpness of detail, the exactitude of the expression, though there is in him also a love of the extravagant, the eccentric, the unusual. But however unusual some of his characters are, they are types that he has seen and observed.

One of the greatest curiosities of the theatrical season five or six years ago was the production, at the Cigale Music-Hall at Montmartre of a number of realist songs specially written for the revue by Francis Carco. Many people were shocked when it was announced that Carco, winner of the Prix of the Académie Française, should condescend to write for a music-hall, and should permit his songs to be intercalated in senseless scenes such as attract people—and particularly foreigners—to Montmartre. But there is no reason why a more literary turn should not be given to the chansons which enjoy a brief vogue.

It is a pity that literary men do not oftener write for the music-hall and for the revues. Certainly, if one is to judge by the example of Carco, it is possible to meet the so-called popular writers on their own ground and to beat them, for the Apache songs of Carco had a great success.

Carco has also written—though this time in collaboration with a dramatist—a piece for the theatre which was played by Cora Laparcerie. For three years it ran, as the principal piece in her repertory.

"Mon Homme" (My Man) is also a variation on the Apache theme. It reveals the astonishing knowledge possessed by Carco of this side of Paris life, and places him among the very best exponents of a subject which certainly lends itself to dramatic treatment.

But the grimmest work that Carco has yet done is to be found in "L'Homme Traqué"—a poignant study of a murderer who is pursued.

Carco may be said now to have "arrived," as the French have it, and to have won for himself a recognized place among the leaders of French literature.

Memories of other Paris cafés crowd in upon me. There is the Procope in the Latin Quarter which when it was a café was frequented at different epochs by Voltaire, Marmontel, Restif de la Bretonne, Sainte-Beuve, Gambetta, and Anatole France. There is the Café Voltaire, dear to Paul Bourget, Henri de Régnier, Maurice Barrès, Jean Richepin and André Gide. And that reminds me of the most tragic frequenter of cafés I have known. He was Laurent Tailhade.

He had an amazing talent which somehow he failed to em-

ploy in any lasting work. He became bitter and vituperative. One would see him in his later days around the Odéon, a broken but still handsome man, though disfigured by the bomb explosion which cost him an eye and shattered his health. It was during the reign of terror of the 'Nineties when anarchy was rampant in France. Bombs were being thrown. One was pitched into the Chamber of Deputies. Fortunately it did not explode and while the Deputies scattered in panic the President calmly shouted: "The séance continues."

Laurent Tailhade, a rebel by nature—and there was indeed much to rebel against at that time—uttered a phrase which struck the imagination of Parisians. He afterwards explained that it had been misunderstood and that he was not attempting to justify the anarchists. The phrase was: "Qu'important les victimes si le geste est beau!" (He meant that there was sometimes in these gestures of revolt a strange beauty which, for the contemplative philosopher, overshadowed the fact that there were victims). It was an imprudent remark.

By a strange irony of fate, Laurent Tailhade was sitting at dinner at the Foyot, in that epoch of terror, when an anarchist threw a bomb in the café. It exploded, blowing tables, chairs, dishes, lamps, to pieces. Laurent Tailhade was picked up horribly wounded. "Qu'important les victimes si le geste est beau!" cried his enemies—and he had made many.

The most joyous frequenter of cafés I have known is Raoul Ponchon. He must now be over eighty years of age, but he goes daily to the Café du Musée de Cluny, in the Latin Quarter, and drinks his beer. Beer? But Ponchon has done nothing all his life but celebrate in verse the delights of wine. No matter: this jolly old man whose little round eyes sparkle with malice, whose beard is at sixes and sevens, whose old felt hat is crushed out of all shape, sits at his table with a few cronies; and when he has to write a poem for the Journal, he writes it with the cheerful rumour of conversation and of coming and going feet about him; and he has never flagged in these bibulous and metrical exercises for more than half a century. Ponchon is the true Gallic bard. He has written more verses than Ronsard and Victor Hugo put together; and there are those who hold that these pleasant easy rhymed gazettes are to be counted among the best work of our time. Perhaps they exaggerate; but Ponchon does not exaggerate, he is annoyed that anybody should take his facile scribblings, out of which he has gained an adequate livelihood, for anything but journalism, and only once—when he was elected to the Académie Goncourt—has he con-

sented to make a volume of them. I cannot conscientiously rank Ponchon as high as do his admirers, though I recognise that the lyrical art has two visages, one grave and the other familiar. But if he is an excellent comic poet, truculent, gay, ingenious, he is above all an excellent type of the citizen of the Latin Quarter, robust, careless, drinking and singing, living in his little Latin Quarter lodgings from his student days to his old age, and taking the café for his workroom and his drawing-room. Bravo Raoul!

Chapter XVIII

A COSMOPOLITAN BUNCH

THE café theme is inexhaustible. What I have already written reminds me of George Moore who was, so to speak, born in a Paris café.

He was a frequent visitor to Paris. He had been a frequent visitor since the days when he consorted with Manet and the Impressionist painters. In his house in Ebury Street, London, there are pictures by Manet, Berthe Morizot, Claude Monet, Pissarro and others of the great Paris epoch. In France he learned to observe and to write: he listened to Mallarmé and to Zola; he consorted with the painters who gave the last great impulsion to art.

That was long ago. The Paris that he knew has greatly changed. His former friends have disappeared. Not all of them however: there is one lady, on whom I often called, who was fond of relating to me how Moore had wooed her. Her hair was white; but the memory of the walks and talks with George Moore was constantly present to her imagination.

Of the Nouvelle Athènes, the famous café of the Place Pigalle, I heard much. In the 'Seventies and well into the 'Eighties it was the nest of the new hatch of artists and writers. That was before my time—to use a hackneyed but poetic phrase—but I afterwards used to go to Montmartre and sit in the café of that name: it was deserted, but at least there was a remarkable Medoc. I could picture the men who clustered around Marcellin Desboutins, who would sit on the leather-covered banquette smoking his little pipe and talking incessantly. There was Catulle Mendès, of the blond beard, and Armand Sylvestre, a corpulent Silenus. There was Villiers-de-l'Isle-Adam, lost in aristocratic dreams which enabled him to support his misery. Sometimes the mystical and tortured Huysmans would appear, and J. L. Forain, the incisive draughtsman whom I knew as a member of the Académie des Beaux-Arts. There was Charles Cros—later to wander about the Quartier Latin—writer, painter, and I know not what besides, whom his friends claim to be the true inventor of the phonograph and the telephone, and who artificially produced precious stones. André Gill, the clever caricaturist who like others of his generation ended his days in a madhouse, and Jean Richepin, and many

others, were of this circle into which the young George Moore was introduced by Edouard Manet.

Nobody knows more about that period than Moore. He came to study painting at the Académie Jullian—which is still flourishing. He fell among the writers and painters who were many of them unknown even to the French but who were destined to change French conceptions of art. None has written of them so lovingly, so penetratingly, as Moore. In the later years he stayed at the Hôtel Continental, on the magnificent rue de Rivoli, opposite the historical Tuileries Gardens, and he could be seen lingering along the book-lined quays of the Seine. He spoke with regret of the vanished Paris. "My Paris was a village on the Seine. Now it is a vast caravanserai for foreigners. But perhaps I am wrong in not adapting myself to the changes; perhaps I am demoded."

Gladys Laurence Groom, a delicate English poet—whose "Singing Sword" was praised by the New York Times as worthy of Keats—was one of his friends in Paris and she would bring me news of the Irish writer. He spoke of retiring from literature—as if one can retire from an avocation! "There should be an asylum for tired writers—something like the Abbaye de Thélème, dear to Rabelais. The difficulty is that writing men would try to exterminate each other if they were confined under the same roof."

Another friend of his in Paris was Viola Rodgers, a charming American who had ended a successful career as a newspaper woman. In her exquisite home in the Palais Royal she told me a little anecdote whose savour would be lost were it translated from the French. She was writing something on Bernard Shaw for an American magazine, and asked Moore if he too would not contribute a short account of his occupation at the moment. At first he refused, but afterwards he wrote to her a letter in which he consented on condition that his article appeared in the same issue of the magazine as her article. "*J'aimerais tant,*" he added, "*être sous la même couverture que vous.*"

His hair was white in these latter days, but his complexion was pink and fresh. He had keen blue eyes, a yellowish drooping moustache, which half concealed a Puck-like smile. Although with "Esther Waters" he had begun the English realist movement, in our swift-moving modern life he was driven back for his subjects to the remote past when people really lived —and are living yet. Moore has spent his life in innovating. He published "A Mummer's Wife" at six shillings—the first full length new novel to be issued at a low price in those three-

decker days when novels sold for a guinea and a half; and then he reverted, in the comparatively cheap days of the novel, to high prices, publishing "The Brook Kerith" privately at two guineas. Nobody has worked over his published books so much as George Moore: he has revised them again and again. He has unashamedly warmed both hands before the fire of life. It was not always the fashion to do so. "I learned from Manet" he said "that one should be ashamed only of being ashamed." In the "Confessions of a Young Man," and in the "Hail and Farewell" series, he is publicly unashamed.

That recalls the anecdote related to me by the well-known English painter, Alfred Wolmark, about Thomas Hardy, whose pessimistic philosophy implied a temperamental ashamedness of life. I was sitting for him, and as he worked at my portrait, talking all the time, he said: "I was asked to visit Thomas Hardy at Max Gate, and I spent a week in sketching him. It was a glorious week. He was a simple but attractive man. Yet he was continually mourning over life. I noticed that he was hale and hearty, that he enjoyed his food immensely—I never saw anybody enjoy his food so much as Hardy—and I thought that, after all, he had little cause to complain of his lot. He had always been successful, and had lived quietly and happily. So one day at table when he was bitterly bewailing life, I could not resist saying 'Life may be bad, Mr. Hardy—but you have a very good appetite, haven't you?' "

I heard an excellent story of Moore. Thirty years ago, on a trip to Ireland, he was crossing the bridge over the Boyne in a railway carriage with Dr. (now Senator) Oliver Gogarty. Entranced by the vista from the carriage, Moore exclaimed: 'Oh, Oliver, I would give £10 for five minutes of that view."

Mr. Gogarty, who is famous in Ireland as "the playboy," pulled the communication cord and said, "There you are, Moore, I've got it for you half-price!" Mr. Moore paid the £5 penalty.

When I was still a boy the name of Richard Le Gallienne held a strange magic for me. He was a captivating figure in the 'Nineties. I read with avidity and admiration his "Quest of the Golden Girl" his "Book Bills of Narcissus" his "Prose Fancies." When I went to London I caught glimpses of him in Fleet Street and was overawed by his presence. His great mass of golden hair was wonderful. It was like a halo round his head; and I, in my youth, thought him a demi-god. I refused to listen to the material explanation of his appearance: how long and how frequent were his sojourns in the barber's chair.

Crimping, I think, was the word which was applied to the glorious operation which he regularly underwent. Max Beerbohm caricatured him—two little hats on the wings of his widespread golden mop—and that was the height of fame. His name we mentioned with that of Oscar Wilde, and he was associated in my mind with such men as Swinburne and Meredith, Pater and Stevenson, Francis Thompson, Bernard Shaw, William Sharp, W. B. Yeats, Ernest Dowson, Lionel Johnson, John Davidson, Stephen Phillips, and a score of others who were the heroes of my boyhood. Le Gallienne was a hero among heroes.

It was some years later that we became close friends in Paris. We took chairs for each other at public meetings—and further than that no friendship can go. For that matter, Le Gallienne is an admirable chairman. He says precisely the right sympathetic thing. I told him one day of my youthful admiration, and though he laughed he was touched. How strange that a few years should have filled the gap that once separated us; that he who once seemed infinitely my senior should now appear to be of the same age! Would that there were more reverence for the men who contribute to our aesthetic delight. Alas! that kind of hero-worship is vanishing even from among the very young.

If some of the old glamour has gone, it is replaced by a more judicious appreciation of his kindliness, his gentleness, his love of the beautiful. To the younger generation he had become slightly old-fashioned. I was shocked when in my house a young man in the twenties began to pooh-pooh the romantic period. Le Gallienne responded mildly, but the young man was not to be put down. He railed against all literary predecessors. Nobody born before the Twentieth Century was worth considering. The worst of it was that I could not turn the conversation. The young man persisted in his course of self-expression—which is a euphemistic word meaning rudeness, ignorance, and youth.

"Formerly," Le Gallienne said to me, "literary critics had at least some knowledge of books. Now they have none. They write as though literature was discovered somewhere about 1900."

I reminded him of the case of one of the best-known American playwrights who had just triumphantly announced that in his new play he would make use of the "aside." Immediately there was a pother in certain journals. Wonderful, wonderful, and again wonderful beyond whooping! Never had anybody

thought of making his characters reveal their secret thoughts in "asides," before the American playwright!

For that matter, the so-called monologue intérieur of Joyce, which has been hailed as something new—what is it but the old "aside," the old soliloquy? The problem we propounded to each other was whether it was better for reviewers to be erudite professors who had read everything published before 1850 but nothing since; or ignoramuses who had confined their reading to works published after 1900—and even 1920.

Richard Le Gallienne kept one old-fashioned habit which I particularly liked. He wrote charming letters. Among my treasures are many exquisitely phrased epistles from him. They are about nothing of much moment, but the words smell of lavender. I am myself a bad correspondent, but under the influence of Le Gallienne I too wrote many dainty letters. It is a pity that in these days of the telephone, the telegraph, the radiograph, and the picture-postcard, correspondence is a lost art. One of my constant correspondents living in the United States regularly sends me cablegrams on trivial subjects to save himself the trouble of writing. As for the picture-postcards, there are shops in Paris where views of almost every town in the world can be obtained; and one of my friends who was to visit Egypt, bought a great quantity of Egyptian picture-postcards and spent many Paris evenings in scribbling over them: "This is a delightful country," "Greetings from Egypt," "We are visiting this place today," "Souvenir of our voyage," "Kindest regards from Cairo," "Here we are at the Pyramids," and so forth. When I asked her why she did this in anticipation, she explained that it took up so much time and was such a nuisance to write on picture-postcards when one was actually travelling: therefore she prepared the cards in advance. Le Gallienne would have sent me long delightful letters.

Le Gallienne succumbed to the lure of America. He was, I believe, one of the first English writers to be caught by the rewards of American journalism. We watched his progress. Beerbohm wrote to "Dick"—

> "O, witched by American bars!
> Pan whistles you home on his pipes;
> We love you for loving the stars,
> But what can you see in the stripes?"

What did he see in them? I asked him the question. He professed his intense sympathy for American literary and artistic strivings. He found the Americans gay. They resembled in

some respects the French for their sprightliness, their eagerness. They offered a contrast with the more stolid British. Yet he preferred to live in Paris. We wandered about the crooked streets of old Paris. He would speak with poetic appreciation of the lights reflected in the river, the impressive towers and turrets and spires, the great open spaces. I would come upon him lovingly examining a sculptured doorway.

To Joyce, Paris was a prison. To Le Gallienne Paris was a gigantic box of toys. He was always a child looking for playthings.

That is why, on his return to Paris after the war, he first stayed in the little Hôtel d'Alsace in the rue des Beaux-Arts. He asked for room Number 13; wherein died Oscar Wilde. Then I found him in an apartment in the rue de Vaugirard—an ancient house—and he proudly pointed to a writing-table which he had bought from the hotel. "The authentic table," he exclaimed, "on which Wilde wrote!" He had bought it for a few hundred francs.

"But what I want is a garret. The proper writing place is a garret. One should be able to look out over a queer roofscape. One should feel above the world. There is an inspiration in skylights and chimneys."

So he had his skylights and chimneys, and the grey tower of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, from an upper room in the street where Adrienne Lecouvreur died in the arms of the great Marshal Maurice de Saxe. Near by Laurence Sterne lived and made notes for his "Sentimental Journey." Still later, he was in an apartment in the Ile Saint-Louis which pleased him by its proximity to the Seine and the gargoyled Notre-Dame. The mists wreathed up from the river and caused him to cough, but the romantic prospect of the willows dipping their branches into the water, and the Eighteenth Century houses, and the slow-moving barges, and the placid fishermen, and the white horses on the quays, were worth it.

Why all this should have suggested pirates and pieces of eight I do not know; unless it be that one romantic thing suggests another romantic thing without relation to their material similarity. He began to write about pirates and pieces of eight. He, the mildest mannered man who ever roved the seas of life, was vastly taken by images of black-bearded buccaneers who chewed glass until the blood ran down their chins. He told me he was stuck and begged me to look over his manuscript and give him a push off into the next chapter.

"It was, of course, good to be in America, where I had a shack

out in the woods, where I could write far from distractions, and where my books spilled over on to the floor. Yes, America is a great country and it is an idealistic country. There is nothing more stupid than the notion that Americans care about dollars. Dollars come easily but they are allowed to go easily. Men make fortunes and do not mind losing them. They are not out to make money. They are out to play a game in which dollars are for them exactly what pieces of eight are for me. I know over forty American poets at least as good as any English poets."

Irma Le Gallienne, his wife, a beautiful delightful woman, is the daughter of Howard Hinton, Editor of the old Home Journal in which Edgar Allan Poe saw his first article in print. Her mother was Lucy Bronson, a noted sculptress. She told me that she had studied music in the Conservatoire at Paris and had won a scholarship. She remembered George Grey Barnard who made the famous statue of Lincoln. Barnard was thought much of in Paris. When he decided to go home the great artists of France gave him a farewell dinner. Rodin literally went down on his knees and begged him to remain.

It was good to sit with Le Gallienne and watch him slowly puffing at his corncob pipe. He would read bits of Theocritus, or he would talk ramblingly, while across his sensitive face would play the lights and shadows of dreams. He would tell me about his beginnings in Liverpool, where he was placed with a firm of chartered accountants; about the London streets when they were filled with hansom cabs; about Wilson Barrett, Henry Irving, Meredith, Browning, Matthew Arnold, Ruskin, Carlyle, and Tennyson. He would speak of men whom I too have known—A. B. Walkley, the dramatic critic of The Times, George Bernard Shaw, the former music critic of the Star.

Best of all was his account of his walking trip, knapsack on back, from Lyons to Marseilles, through the country of Provence—with halts at Arles and Tarascon, immortalised by Alphonse Daudet. He called on Frédéric Mistral, the handsome Provençal poet, leader of the élibres. At that time he had a little dog which he named Tarasque; and Mistral was amused at the appearance of this legendary monster. I picture the garden with its blaze of colour—scarlet blossoms aflame in the sunshine, chrysanthemums, begonias, dahlias, and sunflowers in riotous disorder. I picture the poet, tall, robust, with wide-awake hat, with long Imperial beard. I picture his modest maison, his cabinet de travail filled with books, engravings, busts, and photographs. Mistral, who revived the langue d'oc,

was the true originator of the movement which extended in different forms to many other countries. He inspired Carmen Sylva and Hélène Vacaresco to collect and write Rumanian folk songs. He inspired Yeats and others to revive the Gaelic tongue.

Constance Maud has deftly told in an excellent book—just as Le Gallienne told me in conversation—of Mistral's resemblance to Buffalo Bill. Buffalo Bill and Mistral met each other in Paris, and the two men, startled, came to a dead stop on the Boulevard; and then advanced towards each other and warmly shook hands.

Eve Le Gallienne I also knew in Paris. She came to play in a curious drama of Jeanne d'Arc by Mercédès de Acosta, with scenery by Geddes. Afterwards she won a prize of five thousand dollars for her good work for the drama in establishing the Civic Repertory Theatre.

Better still did I know Gwen Le Gallienne, a talented painter, who mingled with those of us who lived in and around Montparnasse; she is a pleasant sensitive girl who should do big things.

Ludwig Lewisohn was my friend and neighbour, and we were constantly in communication. Many evenings did we spend together in the former apartment of George Biddle, the Philadelphia painter. With Thelma Spear as hostess, capital parties which gathered together the French, the German, the Jewish, and the American élite of Paris were given. It would fill pages to set down their names. At random I recall Sholom Asch, Marvin Lowenthal, Sinclair Lewis, Theodore Dreiser, Sherwood Anderson, Wells of Harper's, Mala Boschka, the Czecho-Slovakian singer and pianist, Yvette Guilbert, and her husband Dr. Schiller, Roy Sheldon, the young American sculptor, Myron Nutting, Paul Burlin, Jan Hambourg, the violinist, Régis Michaud, the French professor who gave up his post in America to spread the fame of American writers in France, Thomas Mann, Ernst Toller, Lee Simonson, Cyril and Evelyn Scott, George Frederic Hummel, Manuel Komroff, and other German and American novelists, the Franco-Jewish composer, Leon Algazi, the musician Albert Jarosy, Horace Kallen, the Jewish-American philosopher, Ivan and Clair Goll who write in several languages, Paul Robeson, the negro singer, Ladislav Medgyes, stage-designer, Padraic and Mary Colum, Joseph Bard, Freda Kirchwey, of the Nation, Irita Van Doren of Books, Léon Bazalgette, translator of Whitman, Oko, the great Hebraist, Elmer Rice, the playwright . . . I forget half of them but

I mention these because they convey an idea of the varied and vivid company of the Montparnasse days.

It was always good to be with the Lewisohns but it was best when Thelma sang. She has a rich golden voice, intelligently trained; and she held us spell-bound when she consented to sing Negro or German or Jewish folk songs. Surely it is a pity that she has been compelled to choose between a concert career and a domestic existence; yet I cannot but approve her choice of domestic existence. What the platform has lost, hearts and a hearth have gained.

In spite of his pronounced Jewish cast of features, Lewisohn, with his high forehead, his clean-cut face, his long hair brushed back, bears a striking resemblance to the current portraits of Goethe. He has written his own life in "Upstream" and I will not attempt to repeat it. During the war he was in bad odour because of his German origin, which made his position as Professor in an American University impossible. But there was a more intimate reason for his coming to Paris. It is alleged that he has revealed this reason in fictional form in "The Case of Mr. Crump." I do not profess to know whether that novel—in my opinion one of the greatest novels of our time—is autobiographical in any other sense than are all great novels. Tolstoi's "War and Peace" and Dickens' "David Copperfield"—to mention only two supreme works—could not have come from any but personal experiences.

On this point I wrote to him when the uproar which followed the publication of "Mr. Crump" was at its height, the following letter:

"There are two pitfalls for the novelist who endeavours to set down interpretatively contemporaneous life without transposing it into pure fantasy or splendid parable—though parable every well-wrought story must be. If he escapes the charge of modelling his personages upon real persons, he will surely be accused of the opposite fault of caricatural unreality. Sometimes both charges are contradictorially levelled against him at the same time. You, with your magnificent "Case of Mr. Crump," which is indubitably one of the great stories of our time, ranking with the most important productions of the Russian giants, incurred the blame of lawyers as well as of critics, who alleged you had come too close to autobiographical verity, and had chiselled in the quick and palpitating flesh. So was Rodin denounced for the verisimilitude of his limbs and torsos. Such authenticity could only be obtained, said the quidnuncs, from plaster casts of throbbing nerve and muscle. You, like

Rodin, had to defend yourself against the foolish folk who are not aware that casts less palpable than plaster are needed to yield results essentially truer than accidental accuracy. How is the artist to work if observation illuminated by imaginative comprehension is treated as reprehensible?

"But, it appears there are degrees of consanguinity for literary creation as for marriage; and perhaps one may be allowed to paint one's remote cousin, but never one's aunt. There is a code for the author, and he must beware lest in gaining a friend he loses a subject—or in gaining a subject loses a friend. He must keep his acquaintances at arm's length, and if he finds himself becoming interested in them must fly from them to avoid the reproach of iniquitous propinquity. His books will suffer, but the conventions will be safeguarded. The nuances are not easy; for obviously one must know before one can write; but if one knows too much one must not write. The frontier cannot be traced on the literary map . . .

"There is Scylla; but there is also Charybdis. Dickens deigned to defend himself against the accusation of invention as well as against the accusation of libellous veracity in the Preface to 'Nicholas Nickleby.' For, it is understood, one must neither copy nor invent. Mr. Squeers was denounced as a gross exaggeration of a type of Yorkshire schoolmaster marked by ignorance, brutality, and cupidity; and Dickens felt obliged to state, 'emphatically and earnestly,' that Squeers and his school were 'faint and feeble pictures of an existing reality purposely subdued.' As for the Brothers Cheeryble, scorned as impossible, he flatly affirmed that he drew them from life. Yet although he was denounced as excessive in his characterisation he also records that several Yorkshire schoolmasters 'laid claim to being the original of Mr. Squeers,' and contemplated libel actions, and meditated journeys to London to assault their traducer . . .

"Rodin, too, in spite of his 'plaster casts,' was informed that his limbs and torsos were grotesque. Life is, of course, grotesque and cannot be believed; but the Philistines should put themselves in accord. They cannot have it both ways."

That deals, though inadequately, with the problem raised by "The Case of Mr. Crump." It was bought by a well-known publisher but on legal advice was withheld from publication. Lewisohn had to refund the advances which had been made, and this was by no means a light task since the money had been spent before the decision was taken. Lewisohn having lost a year's work cheerfully turned to other subjects. In the meantime Edward Titus, an American bibliophile who opened an

interesting bookshop stocked with American and English books, resolved to bring out a Parisian edition. It was tastefully printed and produced. The price was high, but collectors were willing to pay still higher prices for copies of this limited edition. Then the American postal authorities, presumably on account of a few pages whose sincerity can scarcely be doubted, thought fit to ban it. The way of the maker of lasting literature is hard.

We often discussed together the ethics of writing. "The novel," said Lewisohn, "is in my opinion developing on autobiographical lines. It is becoming epic. It is becoming philosophical. Autobiographical it must be, in that deep impressions can only be born out of deep experiences. Epic it must be, because slight works of fiction can no longer satisfy the serious reading public: they demand that the elemental things shall be adequately treated. Philosophical it must be in its content, because if it does not seek to interpret life in terms of modern thought it is merely an elegant amusement for idle hours. Thomas Mann has come nearest to the true form of the new novel, especially in 'The Magic Mountain.'"

Thomas Mann I met in Paris, which in the happier post-war years welcomed German writers and artists. He was a slow-speaking man: deliberate, poised, seeking the right word, a trifle too solemn as I thought. In appearance he reminded me of a Roman Emperor: his face was strongly chiselled in spite of the somewhat fleshly nose and chin. Indeed, the agility of his mind, in spite of his slow seriousness of manner, struck me as Latin, rather than Teutonic.

His brother Heinrich Mann was also a visitor to Paris. I became acquainted with him at the Congress of the P.E.N. Clubs—the Cercle Littéraire International—held in Paris. At these meetings we were writers belonging to twenty different nations. The founder of the movement was Mrs. Dawson Scott, of England—a bright eager woman: while John Galsworthy, tall, clean, erect, the picture of an English gentleman, used to preside. America would sometimes send Gertrude Atherton, who knew France as well as France knew her.

What a crowd we were! There was Bernhard Kellermann, Hugo von Hoffmanstal, the lively Professor Miguel de Unamuno from Spain, the sober Italian Luigi Pirandello, the quiet Norwegian Johan Bojer, the sad-eyed Russian Alexander Kouprine. Who else? There was Rainer Maria Rilke, a Czecho-Slovakian writer who expressed himself in beautiful French and whom I hailed as he walked in the Luxembourg Gardens. There was the black-bearded Benjamin Crémieux, acting as

Secretary—an excellent French critic translator from the Italian. Associated with the Club were Papini, Romain-Rolland, Edmond Jaloux, a novelist, who though held in high esteem has not yet, it seems to me, met with the success he deserves.

I renounce this haphazard enumeration. We were, just after the war, enthusiastic in our attempt to realise spiritual solidarity, and to promote intellectual exchanges. We insisted on the need for mutual comprehension, on the importance of the fraternity of letters. There was a warm family atmosphere in these reunions. I joined the group around John Galsworthy who, after dinner, unbent, and—to use an expressive though vulgar term—unbuttoned. He held forth on the friendship that should exist among artists:

"There should be no jealousies among us, and our community should be a model to the masses. It is not necessary that we should specifically indulge in propaganda. We can spread truth, knowledge, and right emotion, while pursuing our tasks conscientiously. The artist must not stand aloof from his time. He must not shut himself up in an ivory tower."

My notes too recall that Paul Valéry joined in this conversation. "France," he said, "had always turned toward other countries for literary inspiration. In the days of Ronsard it turned toward Italy. In the days of Corneille it turned toward Spain. In the days of Voltaire it turned toward England. Now it is turning toward America."

Georges Duhamel said: "If we do not seek to understand each other and to unite our forces, civilisation will collapse. For civilisations are mortal. The breath of destruction has blown upon our own."

Galsworthy remarked, when we discussed technique, that he thought novelists were getting back to the sober solid craftsmanship of the great men of the past. He had little sympathy with young literary popinjays who watched the antics of their ego and whose word patterns corresponded to jazz in music. He emphasised the necessity of genuine experience and of knowledge of the principles of one's art. Culture, he said, does not necessarily teach one to write; and, indeed, education, in the narrow sense, checks rather than stimulates the imagination.

Chapter XIX

DANCERS AND QUEENS

THE last time Loïe Fuller wrote to me it was to recommend somebody to my attention. That is characteristic of the genius of light and colour who for thirty-five years was the idol of Paris, but who always endeavoured to help her less fortunate sisters. She was a great dancer herself but she was a greater inspirer of the dance. It would not be improper to say that she is the creator of the modern music-hall with its fairy-like spectacles. She did not invent the limelight but she found new uses for it. The miracles which we may see at the Folies-Bergère, the Moulin Rouge, the Casino de Paris, the Palace, are due to her discovery of the services that electricity may render. She was the fay of electricity. She was the forerunner of Isadora Duncan, for from her first appearances in Paris in the 'Nineties, she returned to the old tradition of supple draperies, the liberty of line and movement, the simplicity of the antique dance—and to these things she added the joy of colour and of light.

When I frequented Neuilly where she lived I would often see passing in the streets groups of little girls clad in white robes and long red cloaks, bare-headed, white-slippered. They were her pupils. They were the "petites Loïes Fullers." Long after she had ceased to appear herself on the stage these girl dancers, trained by her, maintained her reputation. They were instruments in the great orchestra of light that she manipulated with amazing skill.

It was always understood that her chief creation was the result of a so-called accident. But it was an accident that might have befallen anybody and doubtless did befall many dancers before her. It required genius to appreciate the possibilities of the chance revelation that came to her.

Born on a farm near Chicago just about the time when France was preparing for the first great struggle with Germany, she began her career on the stage as a soubrette in small parts. A few dance steps which she performed were particularly noticed and she was sent to a dancing-school. Then she was given her place in the ballet but she made little progress. One day she was presented by a British officer with a native East Indian dress of long flowing silk, and that evening she slipped on the stage and tore her usual costume. She suggested

that she should put on the gorgeous Eastern robes. The manager agreed, and as she was rehearsing her effects the light shone through the silk and the colours blended magically. Another thought struck her. Why should not the audience see the wonderful changing colour schemes that could be produced by light?

Georges Montorgueil has written of this scene: "She entered lightly, floatingly, giving the impression of a spirit which flies rather than walks. Her robe was so long that she found herself treading upon it. She held it in her two hands and raised her arms in the air. The audience cried 'A butterfly! A butterfly!' She pirouetted faster and faster. There was a fairy-like image of a flower, and the audience cried 'An orchid! An orchid!'"

The audience was enraptured and from that moment she began to develop the beautiful innovation. In Paris her Fire Dance at the old Folies-Bergère and her Serpentine Dance were immensely admired. Since that time she has become known to the whole world. In our younger days we visited the Musée Grévin, the wax-work show of Paris, because among the celebrities and the criminals there was a figure of Loïe Fuller, with robes outspread, on which played changing colours. This was true fame!

Alexandre Dumas fils was still writing when she began to dance in Paris, and he raved over her performances. Rodin, always alive to the beauty of the dance was impressed. Sarah Bernhardt became her friend. Flammarion, the delightful astronomer, was enchanted with the light and colour that recalled the sky in its most exquisite moods. Anatole France has drawn a delicate picture of this American lady, whose skill, he said, "evoked the lost movements of Greek music, voluptuous and mystic, interpreting the phenomena of nature and the metamorphoses of being." I cannot do better than quote his description of his meeting with her, for it will be endorsed by all who knew her:

"Small features, with eyes blue as water reflecting a pale sky; rather plump, placid, smiling, delicate. I heard her talk. The difficulty with which she speaks French adds to the charm of expression without lessening her vivacity. It obliges her to keep to the rare and exquisite, to create at each instant the necessary expression, the best turn of the phrase. The words burst forth, a strange form of language is designed. To help it there are neither gestures nor movements; only her clear glances, changing like the landscapes that one discovers on a

beautiful road. And the substance of the conversation, smiling and grave in turn, is pleasing. This dazzling artist is revealed as a woman endowed with marvellous penetration, who knows how to discover the deep meaning of things insignificant in appearance."

Painters despaired of seizing the fleeting vision in azure, purple, gold. Poets sang her praises. Georges Rodenbach, for example, who was bewitched by the soft tints of Bruges, sang of the "prelude in mauve expanding into lilac." Jean Lorrain, now neglected but then regarded as one of the great French writers, wrote of her Fire Dance: "Outlined in an ardent flame, Loïe Fuller is not consumed. She filters and reflects light. She is the flame itself. Her robe is agitated and undulates around her like the smoke of a volcanic fire . . . "

She danced too like water—a green ocean, phosphorescent, with strange coloured vegetation. She danced like a lily in white folds. She danced like a phantom. She danced a Danse Macabre, her grey form vague, weird, in the midst of shadows.

But the constant exposure to fierce light was injurious to her eyes. She was compelled to wear large spectacles.

For my part I found something childlike in Loïe Fuller, in her conversation, in her work. She was always pretending. "Let's pretend," say the children. But when she said, "Let's pretend," she gave her fancies a material shape. Her dreams came true. Her pupils could, under her direction, produce the effects she produced herself. A Fuller dance without Loïe was easily possible. Even in the Folies-Bergère days she grew so tired that a double appeared for her and waved the batons to which were attached hundreds of yards of filmy silk. The genius was not in the execution but in the conception.

Her children were well trained but they were not trained in accordance with hard-and-fast rules. She would say to them "Romp about, my dears. Play as you please. You cannot but be beautiful. Do as your fancy bids."

The girls had quaint poetical names—Peach and Butterfly and Pease Blossom. They seemed to belong to the fairy play of Shakespeare.

It is something to remain in Paris for many years and not be touched by the slightest breath of scandal. Loïe Fuller was pure and simple. She had sweet thoughts and was full of loving kindness.

Now the Folies-Bergère is generally regarded abroad as a scandalous music-hall. Its reputation in this respect is greatly exaggerated. Certainly the sumptuous stage pictures which suc-

ceed each other are largely composed of nude girls. Personally, I find the revue as disconnected as a dictionary and as monotonous as a Paris picture salon with seven thousand canvases, but I do not understand how anybody can see the smallest impropriety in these poetic compositions. They are usually as clean as the delicious paintings of Gustave Moreau whose naked women of mythology, dripping with diamonds, clothed with pearls, glowing with coloured gems, are pure and poetic. I do not mean that the subjects are not suggestive: the Orgies of Babylon, the Sept Péchés Capitaux, and so forth; but really their treatment takes them outside the realm of reality. Still, the reputation of the Folies-Bergère cannot be disputed.

Therefore it is necessary to say that Loïe Fuller transformed the character of the music-hall. When she was performing, not only artists were attracted but the pensionnaires of young ladies' schools were taken to matinées. The management carefully eliminated all that was doubtful from the program.

During the war she was a true friend of France. She worked in many ways for the country of her adoption. She organised charities; she promoted intellectual and artistic exchanges between France and America; she helped to found the Spreckels Museums in Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, and the Mary Hill Museum at Washington, which was dedicated when Queen Marie of Rumania visited America. The latter museum was made possible by Sam Hill, a friend of Miss Fuller from the early Paris days.

Queen Marie was not altogether happy in her visit to America, and it was reported that she had quarrelled with Loïe Fuller with whom she had been on the best of terms for many years. In fact, despite certain little incidents, the Queen and the dancer were always friends—intimate friends. The Rumanian Sovereign, English by birth, was as often in Paris as in Bucharest. She had many close friends in the French capital, including Robert de Flers. Prince Carol, in exile in Paris, used to call on Loïe Fuller and seek advice at critical moments. Indeed the dancer on one occasion arranged a meeting between mother and son.

The beautiful Rumanian Queen as a Paris personality deserves some consideration. She was one of the most fascinating women on whom I have ever gazed. Born in 1875, she is the daughter of the Duke of Edinburgh and the Grand Duchess Marie Alexandrovna of Russia, and she was married in 1893 to Prince Ferdinand who became King of Rumania. A year or so ago he died. Jean Bratianu, the all-powerful Minister, had persuaded

him that Carol had become impossible on account of his matrimonial escapades and Carol had been induced to renounce his heritage. Therefore Carol's little five-year-old son, Michael, (whose mother is Princess Hélene of Greece) was proclaimed King and a Regency appointed. In this manner ambitious Ministers could govern the country without the interference of a King.

Marie is poet, artist, mother, woman, and incidentally Queen. I remember that years ago one of her stories was given theatrical shape, and produced at the Opéra in Paris. It had a genuine success. Then it was turned into a film by Loïe Fuller —The Lily of Life. The fairy-tale has charm. It concerns the strange malady of a Prince, betrothed to a Princess, and the search of the sister of the Princess, herself in love with the Prince, for the lily of life, which will bring health and happiness to the Prince. The sister goes through many adventures. Fairies and sorcerers and sirens, a haunted forest and the ocean at the edge of the world, are symbolically introduced. The lily is at length found, but the sister, having secured the happiness of others, dies. What made this production notable was the wonderfully imaginative lighting effects that Loïe Fuller achieved.

Mabel Potter Daggett has told some illuminating stories about the Queen Marie whom she knew. There is one concerning a supper which she gave when the English battle cruiser Frobisher was at Constanza and Prince Nicolaï, her son in the British navy, was about to join the ship. To this supper were invited English staff officers. "Oh, mother," whispered radiant Nicky afterwards, "the effect of your smile tonight will never come off. It's going to last for all my life. What was I before but an unknown little lieutenant? Now every man here will always see you in me. I'm no more just myself for them. I'm the son of the Queen of Rumania."

She went to a hospital where there were typhus cases during the war. The doctor begged her not to enter. The men were dying and it was dangerous. "Dying?" said the Queen. "Then it's my duty." As she crossed the threshold, the first sound to reach her ears was the delirious cry of a dying soldier calling for his wife. "Here, dear, here I am," answered Her Majesty, walking directly to his bedside. She knelt down and folded him close to her heart. And as she soothed him so, he smiled and closed his eyes, and died happily in her arms.

My friend Jaunez des Mares, for many years secretary to the Prince Roland Bonaparte, and for some time one of the

Directors of the Figaro, used to tell me similar anecdotes of the Queen's charming impulsiveness.

Prince Roland's fortune largely came from his marriage with the daughter of Emile Blanc, who held the concession at Monte Carlo, allowing the Prince of Monaco one-third of the receipts. Bonaparte was a lovable person, but in his latter years the long cord which was attached to his glasses often trailed in his soup. On one of these occasions the Queen, noticing his soup-covered cord, bent towards him, and, continuing the conversation, quietly wiped it with her serviette, and put it on one side out of harm's way. Everybody at the table except Des Mares was unconscious of this kindly and skilful action.

At the Peace Conference Clemenceau was fulminating against Rumania. Queen Marie asked him what was the matter. The Tiger roared that he did not like the Rumanian Prime Minister. "Perhaps you will find me more agreeable," she boldly said; and, in fact, before long the French statesman was supporting Rumania's claims.

She is indeed a masterful woman. She proved it when she first went to the Rumanian Court, and, becoming bored with the interminable political speeches of old King Carol at table, rose and said: "I am sure you will excuse me—I have a great deal to do this afternoon." Everybody was shocked, including the Queen whose exquisite stories were signed Carmen Sylva. But old King Carol after a moment of astonishment was pleased with her independence and afterwards became very fond of her.

Of the two Princesses Ileana and Elizabeta there are charming anecdotes. Mrs. Daggett relates how Princess Ileana as a girl of seven went with her mother to stay at Buckingham Palace.

" 'Why do you eat so many bananas?' asked the King one day. 'Because we had none at all at Jassy,' answered the child. 'What did you do at Jassy?' inquired the King. 'Carried thermos bottles of hot tea, just as Mamma did, to the soldiers who lay freezing and dying in the streets,' replied Ileana. But she went busily on eating bananas. 'Will you never have had enough bananas?' asked the King. 'Never,' said the child, 'while you have any left.' "

Paris was startled when the Queen consented to write her souvenirs and opinions in the newspaper Excelsior. But after the first shock of surprise this innovation was found to be not unpleasing. After all, why should not a Queen write for the newspapers? Lord Chancellors do. There was something

in her articles that reminded one of the vivid and audacious pen of Margot Asquith. The articles were, I believe, syndicated and appeared in American and English newspapers.

Her views about modern feminine fashions particularly amused me. She objected strenuously to the general tendency of women to eliminate the differences between the sexes. She thought the day would come when many women would feel sorry for having bobbed their hair. In spite of polo, hockey, tennis, and the ultra-modern dances, woman, she wrote, ought not to sacrifice her health to the exaggerated idea of being without "curves."

Queen Marie blamed the automobile for the dullness in dressing and the lack of elegance on the part of women. She disliked the fashion of short and tight evening-frocks, preventing free movement. Finally, she wondered whether the rage for having practically nothing on really meant progress. . . . There was much more comment of this kind, and shrewd remarks about love and children.

When the end of King Ferdinand drew nigh Paris began to take the greatest interest in the love romances of Prince Carol. I had glimpses of this well set-up young expatriate, who was agreeable but headstrong and changeable in his affections. Born in 1893, he showed romantic tendencies from childhood. He was irritated by the formalities of court life. He disliked the Bratianus who had seized power, and Prince Stirbey, who had a remarkable influence at court. When Rumania entered the war he met a pretty girl, Zizi Lambrinu, of a good family. He married her at Odessa, leaving the army at a time when Rumania's fortunes were low. This action naturally aroused criticism. He offered to renounce his succession to the throne. Later, he was sent round the world, the marriage was annulled, a considerable sum was settled on Zizi and her child. But this did not prevent a law suit in Paris. In March 1921 he was married to Princess Hélène of Greece, and Michael was born. Then he became interested in Madame Lupescu, and again renounced the succession to the throne. The King wrote: "For the peace of my country I sacrifice my fatherly desire to see him again and I charge him to keep his promise not to re-enter Rumania without the permission of the Government."

After the father's death, Jean Bratianu, in the full flower of his manhood, also died strangely and unexpectedly. He had undergone a slight operation on his tonsils. This handsome man, intelligent-eyed, with well-trimmed beard, I had also been privileged to meet. That he should pass away at the height of

his power, at a critical period of Rumanian history, created momentary dismay. The Bratianu family had played an extraordinary rôle in the making of modern Rumania. Jean Bratianu's father was the founder of the Liberal party and a remarkable organiser. Jean and his brother Vintila, a financial expert, were brought up in Paris, where they took their University degrees. In the 'nineties Jean began to obtain his ascendancy in Rumanian politics. Soon he was almost irresistible. He was alert and decisive—something of a dictator. Rumania perhaps needed a man of authority and certainly Bratianu did not spare his adversaries. Except for brief intervals, he was in power from 1907 onwards.

In all this imbroglio, the most romantic, the most amazing that has ever had its theatre largely in Paris, Loïe Fuller was involved by her friendship for the Queen. She did not try to change the political course of events, but on the personal side, when she was asked, she gave conciliatory counsels. Many people believe that sooner or later the matrimonial entanglements of Carol will be straightened out, and that he will again be called to take up the kingly duties which he renounced.

One will always think of Loïe Fuller as the magician of light. Goethe on his death bed is said to have cried "Light! More Light!" and Loïe Fuller, whose sight was fading, also whispered at the end, as she lay in the darkened room, according to Mademoiselle Bloch, her friend and business manager, "Lumière! Lumière!"

An entirely different kind of dancer was Anna Pavlova. She will remain in the public mind associated with a single dance, though indeed she had many other dances equally interesting. No audience would have allowed her to leave the boards without appearing in the Death of the Swan. She was classical in her movements but she gave a new life to the classical technique which she perfected.

Let me recall her as I last saw her. It was, I think, at the Trocadéro. She had aroused the enthusiasm of the crowd that filled the largest hall in Paris. I hurried round to her dressing-room to congratulate her on her triumph. She was a frail little creature, lying panting on a divan. Her husband—who was also her manager—had just removed her headdress, but she was still wearing the white fluffy robes in which she had danced. A shawl had been thrown over her shoulders. Yet she was still Dying Swan, fluttering, exhausted, and in the wonderful words of Mallarmé:

"Tout son col secou a cette blanche agonie." As I bent over

her hand, languidly extended, and murmured my admiration, she seemed to come to life again. The eyes lit up in the little face on which was still spread her maquillage. She talked in tiny bursts of dovelike sounds . . . Yes, it was tiring. But no, her energy quickly flowed back. Yes, she threw herself into the part and veritably experienced "cette blanche agonie." She was glad that she had been able to give of her best that evening. She had danced the Swan many hundreds of times but she danced it each time as though it were new. No, she did not want to leave it out of her program. She would not be herself without it . . . So she told me in a soft cooing hurrying voice.

And now came more and more people into the dressing-room, Parisians and foreigners, members of the French and the Russian aristocracy, artists and writers; the men kissed her fingers; they paid her more or less well turned compliments. She smiled gratefully but with something of a suggestion that the homage, to which she was accustomed, was, at least on this occasion, merited. The women gushed over her. She had a fitting word for everybody. There was a suspicion of sophistication in the scene. Her manners *dans le monde* were artificial—or seemed to be—though they were pleasing with the grace of the Eighteenth Century.

When I talked to her on another occasion at a rehearsal she was somehow different. Then I was struck by her simplicity, her naturalness. She told me of her endless voyages. She had left Russia for the universe. Never was she long in the same capital. Round and round the world she carried her irresistible charm. Other dancers had departed from the classic tradition, but she remained faithful to it.

This is, however, as the French say, only a *façon de parler*, for if her dances are in the classic tradition, she fills them with her personality, and they cannot be adequately analysed in purely technical terms. My friend André Levinson, a Russian critic of the dance who had been accepted in France as the greatest authority on the subject, confirms my impression that for almost anybody but Pavlova the Swan Dance would merely be an ordinary promenade on the toes, the equilibrium maintained by the undulations of the arms, a few arabesques, and a final posture with the inert arms cutting the line of the legs. No particular virtuosity is apparently necessary. Fokine, who composed the dance for a star who disdained it, did not attempt to create anything difficult. Nevertheless many other dancers have tried to imitate Pavlova. None of them have rivalled her. Pavlova puts into the academic steps and gestures a wealth of

images that no *maître de ballet* could indicate, and she elevates the dance into an incomparable poem.

In a word Pavlova is a genius. I have seen her in the London music-halls where cigarette smoke rose in clouds and there was an indescribable atmosphere of banality. Acrobats, ventriloquists, and other performers, made their appeal to the honest bourgeois in search of commonplace entertainment. But when she appeared the atmosphere changed. No longer were we in a music-hall. We were in a region of sublime beauty. Pavlova lifted us above the foolish sentimentality and the brutal sensuality of the place. We lived rare moments of exquisite symbolism. We shared the emotion of the dancer whose soul was in exile within the four walls of the world—a theme which haunted Baudelaire, Théophile Gautier, Wagner. How can the critic test her movements by some algebraic system? As Levinson says: "She escapes from perfection to enter into tragedy."

As for the dancers who accompanied "Madame" on her travels, they spoke with the highest affection of her. One of them, I remember, was an American girl, who used to call on us in our Paris studio; and she could speak of nothing else than the generosity, the kindness, the patience of Pavlova.

Then there was especially associated with Paris the Russian Ballet. It is over twenty years since Serge de Diaghilev made his first appearance and aroused a furore in the French capital. Here was a new artistic thrill—un frisson nouveau. The name of Diaghilev is inseparable from the names of the amazing Nijinsky and of Fokine. He revealed the music of Rimsky-Korsakoff to us. He showed us the artistic stage-craft of Bakst. He made us realise that new colour could be introduced into choregraphy, that new musical ideals were still to be set up, that new conceptions of painting, which were to influence art supremely, were not impossible. He introduced us to singers such as Chaliapin. What did he not do? He is by far the greatest figure in the modern annals of the ballet.

Perhaps only Paris was capable of appreciating the revolution. Even Paris was not at first convinced. There were animated discussions. He had adversaries as well as enthusiasts. It is strange to think that there was some resentment at the production of Sheherazade, and, later, that even Stravinsky's Sacre du Printemps aroused controversy. Picasso discovered that the assembling of colours could be made an aesthetic luxury. Season after season there was something new. After Nijinsky came Fokine, and after Fokine, Massine: they cannot be said to have surpassed each other, they can only be said to

have been different from each other. Sometimes it was alleged that the art of Diaghilev was running to mere mystification as in the much discussed Parade by Jean Cocteau and Erik Satie. But indeed the same was said of each fresh production. The inventive power of Diaghilev did not flag for at least a score of years, and it carried the animateur from victory to victory. Every time he came we confidently expected to be both startled and enchanted. We were. One thinks of the dancing of Madame Karsavina, of Lydia Sokolova, of Vera Savina, of Olga Spessiva, of Alexandra Danilova, of Lubov Tchernicheva, of Nikitina, and of many whose names I have forgotten. Nothing would have kept us from a new production. We were always curious to see the reactions of the public to such works as L'Oiseau de Feu, and, in lighter vein, Pulcinella, and, of course, Petrouchka. Of recent years Stravinsky may be said to have dominated the Russian Ballet on the musical side, and Gontcharova on the artistic side. Gontcharova concentrated on pure form in some of her stage decorations, though she too had dazzled us by her use of naïve and highly coloured folk design in the Coq d'Or. What was at one time found strange in the choregraphy was the mass movement expressive of group emotion. Then there were the surprising vocal scores. In Chout, Larinov, the painter, emphasised the comic effects, while Prokofiev found humorous notes in music. The spirit of Chout, with its gaiety and false perspective, its bizarre costumes, its grotesque stylised action, its general fantasy, was to me a revelation. The décor was afterwards adopted and adapted, notably by Soudeikine in his settings for Balieff's Chauve-Souris.

Besides Satie other advanced French musicians contributed to the Ballets Russes. Among them was Darius Milhaud and Francis Paulenc and Georges Auric. French artists were also called in—Braque, the cubist, and Marie Laurencin, with her sweet blues and greens and roses. If we saw Russian themes developed, with their somewhat violent appeal, we also observed the Commedia dell' Arte, the joy of the circus, the evocation of modern sport in the chic world of leisure (a discovery of Cocteau) the picturesque aspect of sailors, the idyll of the fields, the exquisite manners of the Eighteenth Century: indeed there is no end to the subjects which were chosen by Diaghilev and his collaborators.

It was in Paris too that the Swedish Ballet was born. It was recognized as a new development of the art of the dance. But Paris claims to have created the Swedish Ballet. Why Paris? Why not the Swedish national theatre at Stockholm?

We have the curious paradox that Stockholm sticks to French Ballet—which is really, of course, the old Italian Ballet—while Paris invents the Swedish Ballet. There was no opportunity in Sweden itself of breaking down the somewhat tiresome traditions of the pretty-pretty pirouetting Italian dance. The Stockholm opera-house was wedded to a convention that is beginning to weary. So Jean Borlin, a young genius with a baby face, was compelled to rob Stockholm of its best dancers and to endeavour with their aid to strike out on more original lines in the French capital.

The Swedish dancers did not arrive as conquerors. On the contrary, they were received coldly in Paris. The taunt which was most frequently levelled against them was that they reminded the spectator of the Russian Ballet.

The best reply to this stupid reproach was that of a French critic who exclaimed: "It is a pity that one cannot say as much of the French Ballet!" I do not desire to compare the various types of ballet dancing: there is much in the older dancing which is a perpetual delight. For my part, I still gasp with pleasure when on the immense stage of the Châtelet the *première danseuse*, surrounded by a carefully and symmetrically arranged troop of tip-toeing girls, mounts on the handle of a basket of flowers and, performing her nightly miracle of equilibrium, begins to revolve. She has been doing it for generations—she and her predecessors—without the smallest variation.

If you ask me whether Jean Borlin only presented us with inferior Russian Ballet under the alias of Swedish Ballet, I reply that he and the rest of the troop were certainly under the influence of the Russian dancers—it would be amazing if they were not—but they were nevertheless trying to do something new.

What pleased me most was the element of spontaneity, of youth. The technical qualities of the troupe were not too good. They did not reach that astounding degree of virtuosity that the Russian dancers possessed. But they were fresher and freer and more fanciful than the Russians.

They had not the nostalgia, the weird melancholy even in gaiety, of the Russians. They were joyous, in love with life. They were quaint, addicted to queer conceits. They won Paris at last just because of their juvenility, their joy.

Whether they were entitled to the adjective Swedish on any other ground than that of their birth certificates may be questioned. Certainly they had dances based upon the folk-songs and the folk-dances of their country, but these items played a

comparatively insignificant part in their repertory. They chose Spanish, French, Oriental backgrounds. One might not improperly say that there is no Swedish Ballet—or was not until Jean Borlin, Jenny Hasselquist, Carina Ari, with the musicians Nils Grevillius and D. E. Ingelbrecht, helped by a host of French artists (among them the veteran designer Steinlen) and French costumiers, began in Paris to create it, taking as ingredients of their new art suggestions from every country wherein dance and music and painting exist.

Chapter XX

MORBIDITY, PERVERSITY, SNOBBERY

It is impossible, difficult and delicate as the subject is, to refrain from some consideration of a most important phenomenon in post-war France. On the stage and in books the relations of the two sexes used to be freely discussed; but if occasionally there were hints of rare and perverse things, there was little open reference to them. A book like Theophile Gautier's "Mlle. de Maupin" or Pierre Louÿs' "Chansons de Bilitis," beautifully written, would make its appearance; but it could be taken as a piece of art, not as a revelation of morals. Now all that is changed. On the stage and in books there is a tendency to make the abnormal the normal. There is no concealment, and if there is sometimes an artistic cloak it is transparent.

The other day I witnessed in a Paris theatre a curious drama of which the most striking incident was as follows: a man is in the company of a woman, a casual acquaintance of facile morals; the conversation is banal, and the lady begins to be annoyed; at last a young man enters, and we understand that the lady has been brought in merely to arouse the jealousy of the young man!

To my knowledge, this was the first time that such a topic had been presented to the theatre-going public so plainly. A little earlier, it is true, a strange theme had been treated in a play which had a great and prolonged success at the Théâtre Fémani. There Emile Burdet in "La Prisonnière" showed a woman who, after marriage, was irresistibly drawn towards her woman friend. Parma violets were used as the symbol of the women's relations; and a certain reticence was observed by the author—so much so that the play, translated, ran for several months in New York before the authorities suddenly discovered its real subject and caused it to be withdrawn.

It was for a time regarded as equivocal to send Parma violets to a lady in Paris, just as green was almost an impossible colour in the 'Nineties.

With all respect for the talent of such dramatists as Lenormand and Bourdet, and with the most liberal views of artistic freedom, one may well doubt whether the stage is the proper place on which to deal with these exceptional and pathological matters. It would take us too far to inquire into the ethics of drama and of literature, but we may at least be permitted, in

passing, to draw a distinction between a play and a book. The play is produced in a public place which is open to men and women of every age, temperament, and class. Some of them come to gloat over queer sins. Others come to giggle. Others again, drawn somewhat ignorantly to the theatre in search of entertainment, are genuinely shocked. Further, there are unbalanced spectators who are fascinated by vice but who would never dream of practicing vice were they not taught, as it were, that it is common and natural. On all these grounds I think the play which dabbles in perversity is to be condemned.

Yet in a book observations that are not permissible on the stage may be permissible. A book is bought, if it has pretensions to style, by a limited number of people who generally know what they are about. With a sufficient degree of education, one may read anything without hurt. A book usually contains its own antiseptic. Nobody would read a medical work as a pornographic production, and even when the contents of a medical work are transformed into terms of art they are comparatively innocuous. Moreover one reads in privacy. One can throw the book away at any moment. There is no assembly of self-conscious persons, embarrassing each other, and converting every subtle phrase into a suggestion. Certainly I cannot see the necessity of choosing disease as a subject. My whole nature revolts against the introduction into literature of pathological conditions. There is so much in life that is healthy, so much in passion that is normal, that it seems a waste of time to dwell upon morbid inclinations. They touch so few people that there is no point in studying them except as an expert in a scientific spirit. The public discussion of them is to be deprecated.

In other ages there have been acknowledged friendships between persons of the same sex, and sometimes these friendships have been an accepted fact, a sociological phenomenon, placed on a definite basis, artistic and moral. But I do not think they have ever been so boldly flaunted as today. That there should be tolerated special cafés in Paris, is an affair of the police. What is serious is not that a handful of men and women should form a secret community in a society that is almost unconscious of them: what is serious is that writers and artists should publicly proclaim with complacence and sympathy the prevalence of (to use the current expression) the love that dare not speak its name.

A whole literature has lately sprung up which is tainted with homosexuality. Plain apologias have been penned and pub-

lished. A great deal has been done to drag what has hitherto been an obscure practice, confined to an occult group, into the public domain. Just as the proud mother, watching the young recruit marching with his regiment, cried, "My Jimmy is the only one who keeps in step," so the abnormalists are declaring that they are the normal part of humanity—or at least are the better part of humanity. It is deplorable. Let them, if they please, behave in their fashion among their fellows—that, it can be argued, is their affair. But do not let them preen themselves in public, and loudly boast of their superiority, and call for converts, and mock the rest of the world. It is amazing that practically no protest has been raised, and that the literature of perversion has been hailed by critics with delight.

It is, in my opinion, unfortunate that a writer of the class of Marcel Proust—substantial, "innombrable," as the French say, extraordinary for his power of psychological observation, should figure in the category of authors who brave the ultimate conventions. There is so much in him, that it is a pity to narrow him down to the nauseous Baron de Charlus. Nevertheless, whatever be our view of Proust, we are bound to note that he appears to some of his compatriots as significant chiefly from the point of view of the "non-conformist."

François Porché, poet and dramatist, and, shall we add, the husband of the great actress Madame Simone, in his book "L'Amour Qui n'Ose Pas Dire Son Nom" begins by announcing the appearance in French literature, just before the war, of Charlus. It was on the eve of mobilisation that a fragment of Proust's work, published in the Nouvelle Revue Française, solemnly introduced Charlus into the world of letters. He entered elegantly but severely dressed, now distracted and haughty, now scrutinising hidden things with a piercing glance, surveying adolescents of the lowest type. In 1919 Marcel Proust obtained the Prix Goncourt and became illustrious. So did Charlus. Translations of A L'Ombre des Jeunes Filles en Fleurs, and Du Côté de Chez Swann appeared in England and America. Admirable translations they were, made by C. K. Scott-Moncrieff, a young man whom I had met in the office of the Times in London, and who was designated to join me in Paris in 1922. English and American writers were loud in their praises. I am not sure that they were quite prepared for what was coming in Sodome et Gomorrhe. Until that volume the Baron was relatively discreet. That is to say, his morals had only been sug-

gested in his manners. In 1921 he abandoned all precautions and unmasked himself.

Let me quote a passage from François Porché. "That constituted a new fact. In a prosopopoeia now celebrated and indeed magnificent, Proust evoked an immense sect with its ceremonial, its emblems, its secret language, its physical stigmata and its moral blemishes, its notes of infamy and its marks of honour, its eternal inquietude, its boundless pride, its incurable bitterness. Charlus was no longer alone—an entire species, to which he belonged, surrounded him: it comprised several races, numerous classes, a multitude of varieties. The deviation of instinct from that time did not appear as exceptional, as singular, as the fantasy of a degenerate aristocrat. It became a sort of obedience to another law, a reformed religion. The new church united in its ranks kings and lackeys—many lackeys—dukes and cabmen, artists and butlers, lift-boys, the chestnut-seller of the corner, the concierge, the tailor, the policeman of the crossways, the fireman . . . The street suddenly showed an unexpected side; and after the street, the city; and after the city, the globe."

Porché confesses himself to have been stupefied. He remembered the trial of Oscar Wilde and the attitude not only of the public but of literary and artistic circles. Nobody, not even those who sympathised with Wilde, and felt that he was too severely dealt with, contested the reality of his fault and its ignominious character. Marcel Schwob tried to arouse a movement of protest against the punishment but failed. Wilde's former friends in Paris made excuses. Jules Renard, for example, would have signed a petition only on condition that Wilde would pledge himself never to write again. Alphonse Daudet declined to be mixed up in the affair.

Certainly nobody would have openly championed such aberrations, and Porché is right when he declares that the publication of the first part of Sodome et Gomorrhe was like the staking out of new ground by an adventurous colonist. Surprise was expressed but not alarm. Something had changed. Especially in the social world there was a stirring of curiosity —but that was all. The telephone, which is used for gossip, constantly rang. At luncheon parties passages were read amid laughter. Names were mentioned and anecdotes were invented. Evidently there had been a long work of preparation, and since nobody appeared to be particularly shocked it was surely because the reading public was ready for this kind of literary nourishment.

The whole volume of Porché deserves close attention. The writer recalls how Zola in 1895 shrank from making use of abnormal confessions which he had received from Italy, though he was struck by their physiological and social interest. He sent them to a medical friend at Lyons. We need not follow Porché in his references to the ancient classics. We need not linger over the liaison of Verlaine and Rimbaud. We need not consider his chapter on the origins of our repulsion—and his allusions to various authors. Yet we must note the date of the publication of L'Immoraliste by André Gide—namely 1902. We must note the theories of Freud who began to classify and interpret various phenomena, and whose theories, especially regarding repression, have since attracted the greatest interest in France. We must point in passing to the Physiologie de l'Amour Moderne by Paul Bourget, in which the idea of the sublimation of repressed desires appears. Henri Bergson before Freud had studied the subconscious mind, but Freud with his system of psycho-analysis furnished illuminating explanations—particularly showing the wavering of sexual instinct in infancy. It is not my purpose to undertake an examination of Freudian doctrines, nor to analyse the conclusions of the Viennese savant. Suffice it to say, that from about 1910 Freud began to be understood in France. A new frankness was discernible in the works of Rémy de Gourmont. Binet-Valmer was positively brutal. Francis Carco painted a curious milieu. In 1911 André Gide wrote Corydon—which he locked in his drawer. But Proust, as it were, opened that drawer.

It is to be remarked that Proust did not deal with the present generation but resurrected persons he had known about in the beginning of the century—when they were already of ripe age. Gradually, however, the character of Charlus was modified—or at least he became less and less secretive. No longer were his predilections clandestine.

Today, it is taken for granted, in various literary and artistic quarters which it has been my lot to frequent, that the third sex, as it is called, veritably exists. It does not seek to hide itself. The snippety periodicals are full of equivocal anecdotes. If you go to the cabarets you will hear chansonniers making the most ribald jokes at the expense of persons who are well known—and those persons do not protest. Several popular books on the subject have made their appearance which do not represent the vice as unusual.

I have said that it is unfortunate that Marcel Proust should be associated especially with this aspect of his work. For Proust

had great talent and if there is much that is unpleasant in his volumes there is much that is of deep interest. His style is heavy, but his personages live, and he had an almost unexampled faculty of painting them in their most intimate details. A La Recherche du Temps Perdu is his general title, and sitting lonely in his cork-padded room he summoned up remembrance of things past vividly. "We are irremediably solitary," he said; and in his solitude, surrounded by the desert of the world, he watched the passage of time and saved from oblivion his sensitive impressions of other days. His imagination did not work in the present but in the past. In the realm of memory were the only realities, realities which had been rescued from the tyranny of time. In art he found his consolation. There alone was permanence, and line by line he constructed a permanent world. The insatiable curiosity of the intellect gathered up a mass of material, and, rearranging it, saved it from the havoc of the years. Whatever has disappeared from space is the substance of his books, and, with all its tedious passages, the gigantic work of Proust will live because of its occasional dramatic quality, its irony, its pity, its clearness of detail. His people live as perhaps they did not live in what we call real life. Therefore, nobody deprecates more than I do the unsavoury reputation that has been fastened, not without reason, on the central personage in the magnum opus which Proust patiently achieved in the solitude of the sick-room.

When Proust died, his brother, a celebrated doctor, wrote to me—I was then in the Chaussée d'Antin—a touching letter. Nobody who came into contact with the suffering writer could have failed to be fascinated by his charming manners. Some writers have an uncanny knack of stirring the imagination. They become distinctive figures not only for their friends but for the public. Others remain personally obscure. Voltaire, for example, steps vividly out of the Eighteenth Century, while the picture of Beaumarchais is blurred. Balzac is as well known as his own Père Goriot or Rastignac, while Stendhal remains for the ordinary reader much dimmer than his hero Julien Sorel. Alphonse Daudet presents himself in sharper outline than does Gustave Flaubert; and for one reader who can conjure up an image of Dostoievsky twenty can conjure up an image of Tolstoï. We can see Doctor Johnson far better than we can see Shakespeare. These personal images of authors have little relation to their work.

Now Proust, though he passed on on a dreary November day in 1922, and had lived in a sort of semi-retirement, and was

known only to a small intimate circle, already takes on a distinct shape for the reading public. He emerges from his work as certainly as Balzac emerges. His legend is made up of striking features, such as his cork-padded room and his veronal, just as Balzac for us is perpetually drinking his black coffee or escaping by a back door from his creditors.

Both men wrote a great Comédie Humaine. Proust depicts the Parisian society which he well knew. Though his last apartment was in the rue Hamelin—an apartment which, as he says in a letter, "costs 16,000 francs and resembles a servant's garret"—he accomplished most of his work in the apartment on the Boulevard Haussmann to which he moved after his mother's death. Renouncing the life of the salons he shut himself up in the four walls of the room from which all external sound was excluded. Loose sheets of paper lay around him on his bed.

He dreaded noise, fresh air, and irritating perfumes. If lady admirers sent him flowers, he had them removed immediately. I believe that when he went to the seaside he rented the rooms above, below, and adjoining his own bedroom. Nor would he have the windows opened. When he drove into the country it was in a closed carriage. If a visitor pulled out a scented handkerchief, he begged that it should be handed to the housekeeper until his friend's departure.

Generally in the latter days Proust slept during the day and wrote during the night. He would receive his friends in the early hours of the morning. In the room was little light.

Pierre-Quint, an excellent biographer, was one of the diminishing band of friends who continued to see him to the last. He gives an impression of the midnight scene in the padded room: "The man who lives shut up in this padded room—a melancholy apartment—does not see the room: in his life, as in his books, the stage-setting plays no important part: he mingles with the souls of the innumerable persons who make up his imaginative world. Illness has altogether changed him. His face is pale, one end of his moustache is longer than the other; his nose is pinched; his cheeks are no longer full and his eyes no longer brilliant. He receives you, when he is not in bed, in a dressing-gown. More susceptible to chills than ever, he wears chest protectors of cotton wool over his shirt collar, fabric gloves on his hands, and knitted bed-socks on his feet. Fearing the air, he wraps himself up as much as he can. Contrivances for fumigation give out a suffocating smell. He reminds one of a fabled necromancer in his laboratory."

Even the scent of the chestnut-trees on the Boulevard incommoded the strange inmate of this strange apartment.

"My dear friend," Proust would murmur to a visitor at eleven o'clock in the evening, "I have never been so ill. I can see you only for a few minutes."

Three hours later, at two in the morning, the friend would still be answering the million questions that Proust would put about the world from which he was a voluntary exile. Now and again he would get up late and make an appearance at a grand reception. It was necessary for him, he explained, to know how a Prince, regarded as the arbiter elegantarium, wore his monocle.

He had to describe a woman's hat. So after midnight he called on Madame de C. an old friend.

"Dear Madame, nothing would give me greater pleasure than to see the little hat with Parma violets which you used to wear when I was in love with you."

"But, my dear Marcel, that was twenty years ago. I have not got the hat."

"Ah, Madame, you don't want to show it to me. You wish to tease me. You are causing me a great disappointment."

"I assure you I don't keep my old hats."

"Madame D. has kept all her hats," murmured Proust.

"That's a charming idea, but I have not got a museum."

For Proust these old hats, old faces, old events, meant more than the newer things. He collected them fervently, but it was in a museum that moved and lived.

He liked to talk with servants, with café waiters, with valets. They perhaps know more of the fashionable spheres than the fashionable denizens of those spheres. Particularly did he love to converse with Hector, the maître d'hôtel of the Réservoirs at Versailles, with Charles of Weber in the Rue Royale, with Olivier of the Ritz—to which he frequently went towards ten in the evening. He would command the strongest coffee—a double coffee, a concentrated coffee, a coffee which might be charged to him as two coffees. The waiters would give him information about the people in the room. His tips were not confined to those waiters who attended upon him—he had a piece of money for them all. To taxi-drivers he would give more money than the wealthy Americans who streamed to Paris after the war.

One suspects that though he was genuinely ill he was partly a *malade imaginaire*. It was asthma from which he was said

to suffer, and he surrendered to it, accepting the lot of a chronic invalid.

"If people know about the gravity of my condition," he said, "and I should happen to go on living, they will not forgive me. They will think I am playing a comedy. They will never admit that I am not dead."

Thus his sensibility increased, his pessimism became more pronounced, and his only happiness was in resurrecting his earlier days. When he had trivial monetary losses, he believed financial catastrophe had come upon him.

His pride in his place as a member of the inner circle of smart society was intense, and he was tormented at the idea that the publication of his most audacious volume might close doors to him. He would no longer accept the invitations of duchesses, but he wished nevertheless to have them. His fears were groundless. Not even Sodome et Gomorrhe could create a scandal.

What a brilliant portrait gallery of social figures he has left us! Many of the social figures are recognisable, but Proust is well aware of the unreality of realities, and he insists on the independent and inscrutable workings of the subconscious self. Therefore his picture of *le big-lif* (as the French call it) is entirely different in texture and flavour from that of the society novelist. Proust is often difficult to read. He strains after lucidity and does not always succeed in attaining it because he hedges his positive statements with parenthetical qualifications. His sentences are inordinately long, and the narrative is not broken up. To tell the truth, Proust has a ponderousness which is usually associated with German authors, but the heavy paragraphs are illuminated by flashes of genius. He sets down his observations with minute exactitude. He omits nothing. He seems neither to praise nor to blame. Certainly he is not disgusted.

It is not surprising that publishers were afraid to publish his elucubrations. They thought he would be found long-winded and boring. "I can make nothing of a man who takes thirty pages to tell you that he turned over in bed before going to sleep" wrote one of them.

Proust was the son of a doctor holding a high official position. His mother was a Jewess. His health gave him an excuse for indolence, and he declared that it was not worth while for man, a poor creature, to make himself a particular kind of man. Yet he took trouble enough to enter the drawing-rooms of the 'nineties, and to become a spoilt darling of society.

To him it was a great satisfaction that Princess Mathilde and the Baron Alphonse de Rothschild should permit him to accompany them to the dressmaker. The Faubourg Saint-Germain was his world. Yet he explored it as though he were somehow not a member of the community and gradually he became more detached and disillusioned. Perhaps he became contemptuous of the pretence and the paltriness.

As a young man he launched one of those little reviews—Le Banquet—which are common in France. One may remark in passing that Léon Blum who, though the leader of the French Socialists, is delicate and refined, wrote a poem for this review. Proust also contributed gossip to the Figaro.

To read Proust is not an amusement; it is, as somebody has remarked, a profession. In him is a mixture of sensuality, snobbery, and sickness; a mournful sensuality, laborious, deceptive; a sad snobbery, which takes its pride in effete nobles and well-dressed domestics, and lingers over the mythology of a fictitious world; a melancholy sickness with unreal sensibilities.

The cult of Proust is of course overdone. Paul Souday, the literary critic of the Temps, one of his admirers, made in a salon which I frequented an extremely sound remark:

"Proust resembles in many ways the Goncourt Brothers as a writer, and will probably be found to occupy the same rank."

In the salons where one discussed literature the name of Proust was certain to be mentioned. Such salons, it may fairly be said, are peopled by literary snobs—that is to say by gushing ladies and highbrow gentlemen who strive hard to be in the fashion. It is an unforgivable sin not to have read an author in vogue—or at least to acknowledge one's ignorance.

"Naturally you have read ———" murmurs your hostess.

If you have not contrived to catch the right tone you may flounder lamentably. "Certainly—that is to say—well, I have not had time to read his book through yet—but of course I have dipped into it—it is on my table now—and I promise myself further pleasure from it."

If you talk like that you are condemned. You must boldly declare—like everybody else—"I read the book in manuscript, and the author is adopting most of my suggestions. In its primitive form it was full of faults. I still think that the third and fourth chapters are vastly superior to the rest."

Nobody will believe you, but then nobody will contradict you, and you will keep up your reputation for being *à la page*. Perhaps now and again you can produce a little sensation by sheer boldness. "No, I do not intend to read X. I received a

copy of his book from the publishers with an autographed dedication and immediately flung it into my waste paper basket." But this is a dangerous independence that demands presence of mind and great discretion. For the most part in these circles you must pretend to have read the latest author à la mode. It was these circles that spread the fame of Proust, and I am convinced that the majority of those who talk most about him never went far into his volumes.

What distinguishes Proust, however, from many others who have had their moment of celebrity, is the genuine affection and esteem that he inspired in a truly literary group. That group was formed in the early 'nineties by students of the Lycée Condorcet. Among them were Daniel Halévy, who subsequently edited the Cahiers Verts in which many of the most significant post-war books have appeared, Fernand Gregh, an admirable poet particularly attached to the memory of Victor Hugo, Henri Rabaud, the musician who is now Director of the Conservatoire, and Robert Dreyfus.

Robert Dreyfus is a man of letters who may be described as a seeker after curiosities. He "rediscovered" Comte Gobineau. He resurrected an obscure "prophet" of the Faubourg Saint-Honoré. He has given us his souvenirs of Marcel Proust, not sparing Proust's defects, revealing his inquietude, his fatuity, his suffering, his labour, and finally representing Proust as almost heroic. "We doubted his power to construct a work. We would have sworn that the refinement of his sensibility would never have been perceptible to the public—that to understand Proust, to tolerate his bizarre manners, and to submit to his grace, it would always be necessary to have known him in person and sometimes to have smiled at his extravagances."

Moving in the same world was the rare Comte Robert de Montesquiou—a dilettante, elegant, talented, polished. His portrait has been drawn by Proust. The author of "Hortensias Bleus," delicate poems which the public scarcely read, was the most complete representative of the refined Parisian who is fast disappearing. His Mémoires are a revelation of cultured Paris society. His soirées were frequented by such members of famous families as the Guiches, the Montebellos, the Greffulhes. The Duchesse de Clermont-Tonnerre, the Comtesse de Noailles, the Princesse Pierre d'Aremberg, the Comtesse Ghislaine de Caraman-Chimay,—they, among others, formed a committee to exhibit his paintings which he had hidden during his lifetime. As a poet, as an essayist, as a painter, Montesquiou might have arrived to great heights had he not been the inheritor of

a great name. How often does an aristocratic consciousness of aristocracy prove to be a handicap in France! He attached little importance to his writings or his paintings. Has it been remarked how frequently writers in France are also artists with pen or brush? In the Nineteenth Century Victor Hugo, Théophile Gautier, Mérimée, Baudelaire, the Goncourts, Verlaine, Jules Laforgue, all attached to their literature—in the words of Montesquiou—*un petit bouquet de coloris.*

Though his parties were famous, at one of them nobody appeared. Montesquiou remained in the brilliantly lighted salon awaiting his expected guests. He fumed and raged—though generally nothing could disturb him. At last the lights were extinguished, and he gave up the vain vigil.

The next day he enquired the cause of this sudden desertion. "Did you not see the Gaulois yesterday?" asked a friend. The Gaulois was the favourite journal of the Faubourg Saint-Germain. It appeared that Madame X, who signed her society notes "Princesse de R.," had received from a practical joker a letter purporting to come from Montesquiou, countermanding the soirée; and she had inserted an item to that effect.

Robert de Montesquiou wrote a strong protest to Arthur Meyer, the Editor of the Gaulois, who immediately sent Madame X to make her excuses. She showed him the letter she had received. He glanced at the envelope addressed "To Madame la Princesse de R." Disdaining to open the letter, Montesquiou merely remarked "Ah, Madame, if you believed the title too . . . "

On another occasion Arthur Meyer came into conflict with Montesquiou. There was a sale of books from the library of the poet. Among them was an original edition of Salammbô to which was attached an autograph letter of the author. Now Flaubert in his private correspondence sometimes employed the crudest expressions. Arthur Meyer, posing as the keeper of literary morality, demanded the destruction of the letter. There was a lively battle in the press. Eventually the phrase in question was erased and in its place these words were inserted: "Phrase effaced from the letter, of which the reconstituted text on a fly-leaf will be communicated to the purchaser. It is decently impossible to reproduce it here."

De Montesquiou in everything was the Grand Seigneur, disdainful, authoritative; he surrounded himself with imposing furniture, ecclesiastical chairs of sculptured oak, canonical stalls with golden heads of angels; and from these stalls tailors and

shoemakers and shirtmakers had to listen respectfully to his sermons on the art of dressing. His rose palace at Vésinet was frequented by notabilities such as Loti D'Annunzio, Barrés, Ida Rubinstein. He was, in his palmy days, the master of artifice and of preciosity.

Chapter XXI

THE CULT OF "MOI"

ALTHOUGH in the days when a group of writers frequented the little bookshop of Adrienne Monnier in the rue de l'Odéon, I met André Gide, as I met Paul Valéry, Paul Claudel, Léon-Paul Fargue, Valery-Larbaud, Jules Romains, and many others who were then or have since become famous authors, and although I can recall them in various attitudes and circumstances, I think of Gide as I saw him one evening in a neighbouring apartment. We had read the poems of somebody in the tiny salon of Adrienne Monnier, and had then gone on to a soirée.

Music there was, and some dancing—it was on this occasion that James Joyce, usually extremely staid, performed a serpent dance with Adrienne Monnier—and fortune-telling by cards and palmistry, for we affected a certain credulity; and finally Ghilighili was introduced as a mysterious fakir. Whether he came from Egypt or India I forget, but I perfectly recollect that he came from Montmartre. Fargue, the poet, discovered him, and considered his talents were such as deserved to be exhibited to a company of literary friends.

For weeks there had been strange whispers about Ghilighili. We were on the tiptoe of excitement. Literary men, in Paris at any rate, are far more childish than any other class with whom I have come into contact, and like children we looked forward to a few conjuring feats such as might, I suppose, be seen in the street fairs.

The result of this noise made about the protégé of Fargue was that at least a dozen persons who had not been invited forced their way into the small flat. The chairs were insufficient and were given up to the ladies. The men either stood behind the chairs or sat on cushions at the feet of the ladies. Gide was given a cushion next to mine.

The advantage of having a cushion was that one could place one's glass on the floor. All around us were women on their chairs, and men standing up, holding that crystal object which soon grows the heaviest and most cumbersome object invented by hosts for our torture—while we fortunate ones were left with our hands free.

Fargue, who had donned full evening-dress for the occasion,

brought in Ghilighili. He made a long speech, which was humorous enough, relating how he had discovered the most marvellous prestidigitateur of the age. It was at Montmartre. Fargue was without matches to light his cigarette. He addressed himself to a passer-by who, immediately, when Fargue had made known his want, touched the cigarette with his forefinger, and lo! it was alight. We were there, in that room, an assembly of the most advanced spirits in contemporary French literature, but we unanimously marvelled at this absurd story, sending up ohs! and ahs! and gazing at each other in amazement.

Fargue then, according to his account, asked the light-fingered stranger into a near-by café. There they talked, and Ghilighili showed him a score of tricks. Tricks was not the word that Fargue used. We were bidden to believe in some supernatural power possessed by Ghilighili, who could produce roses from the air, and could make drinks vanish in the twinkling of an eye. When he had amply demonstrated his skill he told Fargue his history.

It does not much matter now what the details of that history were. Certainly it was rocambolesque. It belonged to various epochs, and in it there were episodes of piracy, of burial and resurrection, of weird initiations, of battles, of shipwrecks, of transmutations, and finally, after a hotch-potch of incredible romance, the flight of Ghilighili on a magic carpet from some Eastern place to Montmartre, where the first person he encountered was Fargue who asked him for a match. I do not vouch for the accuracy of my recollection, but certainly Fargue spun out a narrative on these lines, which we would not have dreamt of criticising.

Thereupon the fakir went through a curious repertory. One of his tricks was to produce a number of eggs from his mouth. Another was to cut off a piece of a lady's skirt and burn it—the lady afterwards examining her skirt and declaring it to be whole. He would put rings on a stick and while the two ends were held—one by Gide and one by myself—would whisk them away.

The sequel, however, was that Ghilighili—his name was given to him because at the end of every act he exclaimed, with an air of triumph, "Ghilighili!"—found himself engaged by every fashionable hostess in Paris to perform in her salon; and an excellent living was assured him. It is fortunate for an itinerant conjurer to encounter an imaginative poet who can persuade, if only for a moment, a group of writers of the reality of his fantastic inventions.

Gide sat throughout this performance impassible, with a Mona Lisa smile lurking in the corners of his lips. His head, almost bald, was aslant in a characteristic attitude; two fingers were pressed against his square forehead. Under the bushy eyebrows were the thin slits of eyes, and under the thin slits of eyes was a delicate nose: such is the portrait of Gide that has impressed itself upon me.

Gide is gentle in his manner. He has the tenderness of a dreamer, but he speaks with a precision of a scientist. He is modest and has never sought publicity, though he is perfectly conscious that he is the leader of a school and has had a real influence on his generation. Some of his manuscripts he kept in his drawer for years and when he published them the edition was limited to a few copies for his friends and disciples.

Yet if he has been deliberately retiring and has seemed to seek isolation he is not really indifferent to fame. He complained to me that while his works have been translated into other languages they had not been translated into English, though he had been largely fashioned by English authors. Since he uttered that complaint he has been translated into our tongue.

Still, he is perhaps less read than any author of similar reputation. He is aloof and reserved. To Paul Valéry he once said, "If I did not write I would kill myself," but apparently, after having written, he is somewhat indifferent to the dissemination of his work. He is regarded as a Puritan, though I cannot see the justification for this description of one of the most careful artists of our time. Partly has the term been applied because Gide is anti-Catholic, and partly because his language is clean and unornamented, sometimes possessing a severity that critics with more energy, like Henri Béraud, regard as aridity.

Oscar Wilde and Friedrich Nietzsche helped to direct André Gide in his youth. Gide has written incomparable pages on his friendship with Wilde, who, fascinated by the literary life of Paris, in his turn impressed the younger French artists. Wilde taught the supremacy of art over morals. Nietzsche taught the need of superior men who would live dangerously, who would live absolved from common prejudices. "Intensify life and keep the soul vigilant," wrote André Gide in his first book Les Cahiers d'André Walter; and in Nourritures Terrestres he wrote: "You will never know the effort that it cost us to interest ourselves in life, but now that it interests us, it will interest us, like everything else, passionately."

Classic Gide is, according to his own definition. Classicism, he declares, is the art of expressing the maximum though stat-

ing the minimum. It is an art made up of restraint. Every classic author is more deeply moved than he appears to be at first glance. Every romantic author appears to be more moved than he is in reality. But this does not mean that ready-made rules should be followed. If you carefully choose a hundred persons of superior intelligence, only one of them will be found capable of judging anything for himself. That is why schools necessarily triumph. They furnish us with a stock of ideas and of methods which happen to suit our temperament, but whether in the domain of politics, religion, or art, they are not truly our own. Even to judge ourselves—perhaps above all in judging ourselves—we need distance and detachment. We must renounce ourselves to know ourselves. In the Immoraliste, perhaps the capital work of Gide, his hero recovers his equilibrium precisely as he liberates himself from so-called morality.

There is a sense in which this teaching can be considered Protestant—but it is certainly not the rigid Protestantism of the non-Catholic church. André Billy properly remarks that the case of André Gide outpasses the limits of literary analysis. It belongs to the pathology of instinct, and in that lies its importance. A troubled epoch is reflected and illustrated by Gide. The morbid misgivings of a generation are particularly revealed in Les Faux Monnayeurs.

Gide is not really a novelist though he has written several novels. He excels in meditations and confessions. To escape from tradition has always been his chief aim, and in this he has found many imitators. The stamp of Gide is particularly to be seen on the Nouvelle Revue Française and the young men who have grouped themselves under its banner.

Of his sincerity there can be no doubt, though it is a sincerity touched by irony. It may be that had he not been disappointed by the failure of his first book he would have made a greater appeal to the great public. When he found that the great public did not respond, he turned his back on it. He declined to seek the suffrages of the vulgar. He wrote not for money but to satisfy his own artistic desires. In this he resembles Paul Valéry, Pierre Louÿs, Marcel Proust, and others of his age.

In a "little chapel," as the French say, I asked, after a long absence, for news of the men I had known, and received replies which throw a lurid light on literary manners:

"Georges Duhamel? We know nothing of him. He has become almost a best-seller."

That was sufficient to condemn Georges Duhamel in the eyes of the devotees of the little chapel.

"And Jules Romains?" I questioned.

"Why, Jules Romains too has left us. His play has reached its two hundredth performance."

The name of Jules Romains was erased from the membership of the little chapel.

There were other lost leaders. They had betrayed their trust because they had pleased the people, and were actually read or heard and appreciated by the general public. Their success implied their defeat. It was a proof that they had deserted their earlier ideals.

Yet perhaps this is not true of André Gide in more recent years. He has taken a new lease of literary life. The public appears to mean more to him. He has published more freely and less occultly. Si le grain ne meurt and the Immoraliste, which reveal the essential Gide, voluntarily sober even when he is implicitly audacious, nicely balanced, afraid of affirmations, preferring negatives and half truths, yet beautifully clear and stripped of vain ornamentation as an athlete is stripped of superfluous flesh, have been issued in cheap editions at one franc seventy-five centimes. The former had become extremely rare. For its wider dissemination the author has expurgated it. A good deal is lacking in this simply told autobiography, but as it now stands it is one of the supreme examples of souvenirs of childhood. The publisher explains that it would be regrettable if French readers were not allowed to know a work known to the rest of Europe, and he declares that the early chapters serve for the teaching of French in various English colleges. Bernard Fay remarks that Gide is torn by the two tendencies of modern French literature—the desire for new sensations, and the desire for isolation in a self-created spiritual prison. He suggests that Gide has somehow contrived to reconcile, after a long struggle, these two tendencies.

It is certain that Proust and Gide and the authors of the Nouvelle Revue Française who ranged themselves around Jacques Rivière, critic, essayist, esthete, are gradually being accepted in Anglo-Saxon countries as best representing contemporary France.

That was, indeed, the complaint of Henri Béraud and of other writers who are, first and foremost, robust. They began an attack not merely on Gide—not principally on Gide—but rather on the curious propaganda, cleverly directed, which held up the Gide-Proust-Nouvelle Revue Française authors as the

real writers of France. They certainly show one side of the French spirit, but they should not be regarded as the whole of France. How often does one encounter dilettantes, American and English, who suppose that when they have named Paul Valéry, the obscure, Marcel Proust, the sick morbid painter of a corrupt society, and André Gide, the austere immoralist, they have named the leaders of French literature. They sometimes add the mystical Paul Claudel. But they deliberately ignore the great teeming wealth of talent possessed by healthy young men who write cleanly and sanely, entertainingly and well.

If I were asked what is the most notable feature of French writing today I should unhesitatingly indicate its virility.

One of the interesting controversies of the post-war years has been the controversy between the Gide-Proust-Valéry group and the vigorous Béraud group. It may be that in a purely literary sense Gide, Proust, and Valéry are superior to any champion that the other side can present. Yet even here we must make reservations. Proust is marked by very serious faults. Valéry, a delicious poet, a refined artist, has produced little. Gide, with his exquisite prose, is unquestionably frigid. In any case the exaltation of this trio has been exaggerated. They have been exploited beyond reason, and it is time that the outside world should learn that France is not mournfully reminiscent or preciously sterile or coldly introspective, but is energetic, healthy, imaginative, as well as intelligent, and that these qualities are reflected in a score of forceful writers.

It is not surprising that there should be a reaction against the Green Carnation and the literature which has grown up around this equivocal symbol. In my chapter on Proust I discussed the book of François Porché, but Porché also devotes many pages to André Gide. Gide, in spite of himself, is a moralist, not an immoralist; and his morality takes the form of a constant attempt to escape from false moral prejudices. His demand for liberty is made with an austere courage. He is the austere pastor in his most daring suggestions. He defends with a curious elevation desires which are generally condemned. In the Immoraliste there is nothing that is explicit, nothing that is brutal. Yet here is an unpleasant atmosphere in which move the personages of his narrative. One feels that there is a perpetual struggle between good and evil—an oscillation which does not cease, a problem posed which is never resolved.

When in 1922 Gide boldly published Corydon, he laid the book on what for him was the altar of truth. Eleven years

before it had been printed, but only a dozen copies were issued; and two years earlier a second edition, also confidential, of twenty-one copies was issued. These editions of twelve and of twenty-one copies denoted the prudence of Gide. What happened in 1922 which induced Gide to issue his secret work in 5,500 copies? My own copy cost only six francs seventy-five centimes.

One cannot doubt that the success of the Proustian work rendered this dissertation on Uranism possible.

The vice of which it treats—but which it does not treat as a vice—had been accepted by a section of the public. Doctor Vachet estimates that there are 200,000 devotees of this cult in Paris. I do not know how he arrives at this conclusion. Nor do I admit his conclusion. I am convinced that he exaggerates. I do not wish to convey the impression that the practice of Uranism is widespread. All that I mean is that discussion of the subject is admitted, that in intellectual circles nobody is shocked at allusions that would have been considered scabrous a few years ago. Yet even in this matter we must be moderate. I have just read a newly published life of Rimbaud which maintains the pretence that Rimbaud's relations with Verlaine were innocent, though the letters of Verlaine, and the horrible collection of poems by Verlaine that is secretly sold, would amply prove, were there no other evidence, their debased practices. This would seem to indicate that we are not entirely degenerate—that there still exists a sense of shame which will go so far as to deny the facts.

In his preface Gide relates that his friends urged that Corydon would do him harm. But he rejected their advice because he did not care for applause, decorations, honours, and an entry into fashionable salons.

If Corydon provokes indignation, he professes not to care. He will not lie. He believes that whatever is thought, should be written.

He states that the works of Proust have habituated the public to consider with sang-froid subjects that it formerly preferred to ignore. His book is an attempt at explanation. There is in it no personal preoccupation, but a strict scientific objectivity. At least that is his purpose. Corydon is a series of dialogues in which he seeks to demonstrate the legitimacy of certain instincts, and to defend the practitioners of what is sometimes called Grecian love. The thesis is that what has been regarded as unnatural is perfectly natural.

This piece of special pleading is illuminated by the confes-

sions of Si le grain ne meurt. In this book Gide is remarkably frank. In it is an amazing mixture of coldness in the conventional sense and sensibility in the Gidian sense. The author, in the name of morality, combats an inculcated morality. There are analyses of pure sentiments, charming pictures of family life, evocations of the serious France, chaste and touching figures. But on certain pages there are the most troubling confessions.

It is my business here not to comment at length on the enigma of André Gide, but simply to show in what direction the works of Gide, as of Proust, tend. Those who properly admire their art are entitled to do so, but they should do so with a full knowledge of the content of their works. Unhappily I believe that many people speak in total ignorance, and are guided by an intellectual snobbery that has never been so strong as it is today.

To separate authors from this or that passage of their writing is a difficult process. In the case of Proust, one may say that thirty pages alone out of three hundred contain passages which the world in general still agrees to hold in horror; but there remains an atmosphere of morbidity that is repulsive. In the case of Gide, matters are still worse. Though he is a consummate artist, far too clever to shock one by his brutality, there can only be one interpretation of the most important of his works. It is idle to gloss this over, to skate lightly across perilous patches, pretending that they are not there.

Yet the impression should not be given that there is nothing but these perilous patches. On many subjects Gide is superb. If it were possible to abstract his reflections on one subject, the rest—delicate notations, elevated philosophy, exquisite sensibility—would compose a marvellous anthology. But unless I am much mistaken Gide would be the first to protest against such expurgation. For this or that purpose, literary, artistic, pedagogic, propagandist, expurgated editions are admissible, and Gide has himself accepted them. But it is on condition that his work as a whole is left intact, and that the part is not to be taken by the real student of Gidian thought for the whole. There may be a Gide for the larger public, but there is another Gide for the so-called élite. The distinction is very clear, and it behoves us in England and America to know precisely where we are going if we accompany André Gide.

Yet this having been said, one is freer to praise Gide as a master of French prose. He has no use for verbal acrobatics: he rejects mechanical formulas and academic sterility: he tries

to state, simply, synthetically, his own experiences, his individual soul. On the fly-leaf of one of his volumes are the words "Extremes Touch," and it is evident that Gide wishes us to understand that sultry exoticism and Calvinism are not impossible companions.

He was born in Paris in 1869 of a Southern father and a Norman mother, and he was brought up in the Huguenot faith. As a boy he travelled over Europe. At school he was the playmate of Pierre Louÿs; and then he went to North Africa. African scenes captured him and are frequent in his books.

To Pierre Louÿs he attributed his beginnings in literature. "I would have been a savage, living in solitude," he said, "had it not been for him. I was terribly timid, and though I wished to enter literary circles I was held back by fear. I was induced, however, by Louÿs to take my first book to José Maria de Hérédia."

Hérédia disappointed him. He had expected to find the author of the carefully chiselled sonnets a mysterious figure, full of silence and of golden words. Instead, Hérédia's voice was shrill, his manner was commonplace, he was not interested in deep things but only in the superficial things of art.

Gide fashioned for himself his instrument of speech; clean, direct, without useless flourishes. It is not "bookish." He spares the epithet. So he wrote Les Nourritures Terrestres, a Dionysian chant; and then L'Immoraliste, a story in which the protagonist, recovering from an illness, is seized with a great hunger of life under the African sun. In La Porte Etroite, Gide tells a story of renunciation—the renunciation of love by a girl who, after her sacrifice, walks wearily on the narrow road. Not dissimilar is La Symphonie Pastorale, a beautifully wrought narrative of a Protestant household set against the snowy background of the Jura. As critic also Gide has done excellent work; and he has translated Shakespeare, Rabindranath Tagore, Joseph Conrad, and William Blake.

Jacques Rivière, the editor of the Nouvelle Revue Française, died prematurely; and his collaborators rendered sincere and pious homage to him. Rivière was a notable inspirer of others. He stood for intuitional judgments: an escape from tradition, from mere scholasticism. He would find salvation, in every sense, personal and artistic, in himself. His discussion with Henri Massis on this subject is memorable. Massis represents the opposite tendency in French literature—away from the "moi." Massis insists on the need for dogma, for authority, in art as in life; only thus can one avoid the pitfalls of intellec-

tual anarchy, of emotional restlessness. On one side, in France, you have this neo-Catholicism, and on the other the cult of one's own soul, without laws, without prejudices.

The life of Rivière was uneventful: he came from Bordeaux to Paris to attend the Sorbonne where he received a degree in philosophy. Then he met Gide and his group. He associated himself with the Revue, and after the war became its chief. One novel he wrote—Aimée—a powerful account of a psychological struggle, of passionate desires, of cerebral distress. But he is, above all, a type of the modern French critic: subjective rather than objective. His essays are appreciations, personal, exalted; they tell of his adventures among the masterpieces of Baudelaire, Claudel, Gide, Wagner, Debussy, Cézanne and Gaugin. That is the keynote of much of the newer work, the outlook of many of the newer men: Barrés expressed it in the phrase "Le Culte du Moi."

Chapter XXII

THERE WERE GIANTS IN THOSE DAYS

YEAR after year I tramped through the galleries of Paris—the Salon of the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts, the Salon des Artistes Français, the Salon d'Automne, the Salon des Indépendants, and more recently the Salon des Tuileries. In the end the physical exertion, to say nothing of the mental exhaustion, was too much for me. I decided to forego this periodic pleasure—or pain. The great exhibitions of the spring and autumn occupy the whole of the Grand Palais and the Palais de Bois at the Porte Maillot. There are many thousands of canvases. It is quite impossible to pretend to see them. One goes through scores of rooms, covering miles and miles of floor space, and all that really remains is a sensation of fatigue. Æsthetic emotion is rarely aroused.

No wonder that these exhibitions, which have grown unwieldy, have been supplemented or, for some people, replaced by one-man shows. There in the one-man shows it is indeed possible to study the work of painters, and to carry away a distinct impression. If I am weary of the Beaux-Arts and the Artistes Français and the Salon d'Automne and the Salon des Tuileries and even the Salon des Indépendants which, without a jury, allows anybody, good or bad, to hang up his pictures, there still remain the well-arranged rooms of the dealers. Unfortunately these have multiplied amazingly since the war. I began to count them up the other day, but when I arrived in the neighbourhood of a hundred I became confused. They are everywhere. They present the Old Masters mostly in the vicinity of the Place Vendôme. They present the precursors of the Impressionists and the Impressionists themselves mostly around the rue de la Boëtie. They present the living painters of every school everywhere from Montmartre to Montparnasse. One cannot keep pace with it all.

I truly believe that Paris, by its influence, by its possession of the leading painters, by the quality of the work that is being done, deserves the title of Art Capital of the World. But if it did not deserve the title for merit alone it would assuredly deserve it on the ground that there are far more pictures to the square mile in Paris than there are in any other city.

They overflow from the salons and cafés into the streets. In

the brighter months of the year, hardly a week goes by without an open-air display of pictures. Artists come out in great battalions and hang their canvasses on railings, prop them up against lampposts, arrange them round the trees. The whole center of such boulevards as the Boulevard Raspail is a long outdoor gallery. The old square of the Place du Tertre on the Butte is a roofless salon.

Certainly the profession is overcrowded, and the bulk of the work is sheer rubbish. Moreover, the picture-dealers boom particular painters from time to time, precisely as share-dealers boom shares. One dealer, with whom I talked in the drawing-room of a mutual friend, grew confidential: "We can *make* any painter we please. It is quite simple. We have only to collect his canvasses and then at a given moment, set the critics going."

I felt he was boasting: "You cannot set the critics going, as you express it, precisely when you please and in the way you want."

He laughed: "You must come to my office, and I will show you the list of critics whom I control. It will be an eye-opener for you."

Let me repeat that I believe him to have been boasting. Still, there are unquestionably, in the picture business, plenty of complaisant critics.

Further, the critics themselves have an interest in their protégés. One of them, a friend of mine, will sometimes give me what he calls "tips," just as a man who is interested in stocks or in horses will give "tips." "Now is the time to buy ——," he will tell me. "His pictures are going cheap, but I happen to know that next year he will be fetching high prices." He is, I think, perfectly honest, but he keeps his ears open and acts accordingly. It is much more important for an art critic in Paris to keep his ears open than to keep his eyes open. He must know in advance who is to be the next favourite of the public.

This particular critic holds a weekly reception. The young men attend it, anxious to curry his favour. They bring him presents of their pictures. He carefully puts them away, and when the boom starts he brings them out and sells them to advantage.

It does not follow that the critics are, even from this commercial point of view, always right. Recently there died a well-known critic who had accumulated hundreds of modern paintings. When they were examined with a view to their sale there was consternation. Everybody had supposed that the col-

lection was almost unique and of great value. But the critic had missed the market. The collection was incredibly bad and quite worthless.

I should certainly desire to help any artist of talent, but with some knowledge of the game I am bound to admit that commercial considerations are far too much in evidence, and for one good man who is discovered ten poor painters find themselves lauded to the skies. They have reason to congratulate themselves, as have the dealers. But the impudent manufacture of so-called masters and masterpieces has been vastly overdone.

"If paintings did not sell," exclaimed André Lhôte dolefully, "painting would be saved." Lhôte, who has an academy in Paris, is, with Braque and Albert Gleizes, one of the last of the Cubists. His own sincerity is unquestionable. The Cubists have contributed greatly to modern art, though Cubism was only a stage. Some of the men who passed through that stage have profited by it. On others it has had a disintegrating effect.

Lhôte, asked in what direction painting was going, wittily replied: "In the direction of the merchants. There is, picturally speaking, no other direction. The younger men—and the older men—think chiefly of selling. One season they will cultivate this style and the next another style. They will be romantic or realist or cubist. If they hit upon a successful trick that can be exploited, they will stick to it; but principally their desire is to sell and they will do anything to obtain a contract. That is not the way to produce pictures. Again, there is a neglect of *métier*. A careful technique slowly acquired is despised. They want to show their temperament as aggressively as possible. What we need are heroes, totally disinterested. Painting has become a demoralising business."

I am sure I do not misrepresent the views of Lhôte. In painting, as in all art, the idea counts. Courbet—who suffered greatly in the esteem of his contemporaries because in 1871 he was regarded as the ringleader of the revolutionaries who pulled down the column in the Place Vendôme—was a great painter in that he had ideas. Ideas may be bad or good, but they are an inspiration. Those who lack ideas lack convictions, and, with or without skill, can never accomplish anything worth while.

So the young men who pass through the academy of Lhôte are sometimes brilliant, but they rarely have that mystical ardour which illuminates all artistic work. If there are two men of equal merit from the technical viewpoint, the man who is inspired by an idea will undoubtedly go much further than the

other. Even without technique he will, if he is sufficiently moved, do something. Thus, as Lhôte remarked, Chardin was probably a more accomplished painter than Delacroix, but Delacroix was by far the greater artist.

Technically it is possible to find great fault with Cézanne, but Cézanne too was a great artist. Dilettantism in method, associated with "arrivism" of purpose, are the chief dangers of French painting today.

That is why, despite much cleverness, there has been, with the possible exception of Cubism, no movement unquestionably stimulating since Impressionism. Ideas and convictions—they hardly exist. Camille Mauclair—who is scoffed at by the advanced commentators because he tells the truth—is one of the few level-headed writers about art left in France. He deplores the elimination of psychological meanings. The painter of a portrait should be "chiefly occupied with the soul." Instead, he produces a still-life whether he is dealing with persons or with apples. The theory that chromatic play alone is essential, that the subject is a matter of indifference, that painting should be purely exterior, has wrought much harm.

Unfortunately, for a time artists found that they could attract attention, and even become famous, by thinking out some new theory or inventing some new style. Anybody who chose to stand on his head in the street would quickly get a crowd around him. Therefore it was considered clever (if I may take an imaginative example) to pretend that lines in perspective widen out instead of—as the world has strangely believed for centuries—running together. Again, no picture should be finished: it was proclaimed that a painting was only artistic if it was left in a sketchy state. Or, human beings were deformed—they were, for example, given elephants' legs. Recently, I watched a painter, to whom I had consented to sit, mixing his pigments: lots of white, and yellow, and blue, and red, all churned together into mud. I excused myself and left him.

It is sometimes supposed that these movements were the outcome of the war. This is, however, not the case: they began before the war, and Paris pullulated with groups who had cut themselves off from the past, and had discovered that they alone were the inventors of painting. This was convenient because it did not in the least matter whether one knew anything about colours, whether one could draw as well as a child at school—indeed, there were critics who affirmed that real art was only to be found in the direct untutored drawings of chil-

dren or in the crazy concepts of madmen—all that mattered was that the painter should put himself forward as inspired, as having a message, as representing the future, as revolutionising the art of Rembrandt.

Last summer I was staying in a little place much frequented by artists. There appeared at my hotel a painter and his wife who were shown an *atelier* which had been occupied by Daubigny, by Millet, by Diaz, by Boudin and by many other of the most celebrated French artists.

"We had better take it," said the wife, "perhaps it will inspire you." "Certainly not," replied the painter, "if all those artists have stayed in this *atelier* I should be afraid of catching their influence and of becoming *pompier*"—that is to say, academic.

The younger generation has been taught to despise the efforts of those who have gone before. In its own trivial way it sometimes discovers some small principle that the older men well knew, but which they put in its proper place in their system.

The public has been exploited by the critics and the art dealers, but the reaction has set in. There will always be *fumistes*, there will always be those who will experiment—indeed every true artist experiments all his life—but it is clear that the day of novelty for novelty's sake—which usually means impudence and ignorance—is nearly over, that the public has had enough of ugliness, incompetence, impertinence, imbecility: that the snobs are plucking up courage and will not profess a liking for what they do not like; that, in short, the whole current of art is turning back to classicism tempered by modern knowledge.

Let me set down some impressions of the giants of the last generation. My mind goes back to the visits I paid to the delightful village of Giverny—just beyond the gateway of Normandy. My own little Normandy cottage stands on one side of the river, and on the other side is the beautiful garden in which Claude Monet, an old man, lived and worked until a few years ago. In his later days, Monet, who had passed the age of fourscore years, was reluctant to admit visitors. Yet visitors, British and American, came in troops to get a glimpse of that garden and to look upon the Master of the garden.

There he was, beside the lily pond which he had so often painted, an old long-bearded patriarchal man. Behind him were the tumultuous emotions of youth and the fierce ambitions of middle age. The hour of serenity had come. In this perfect place peace had her abode. To the end, Claude Monet placidly painted beside the lilies, amid the lilac and iris. As the seasons

succeeded each other, violets and azaleas, foxgloves and myosotis, roses and chrysanthemums, bloomed in this paradise of perfume and colour. They clambered over trellises, bushes, hedges, walls, and overhung arbours. When the snow covered them, there was still the greenhouse with its tropical orchids. Golden pheasants, radiant plumed peacocks, exotic waterfowl, were the companions of Monet. In the Jardin d'Eau were the rushes and rhododendrons, while white and mauve petals floated on the water under the graceful Japanese bridge on the other side of the little railway line.

It was something that I will never forget: that garden which Monet began to cultivate, like Candide, over forty years ago. He cultivated his garden—or rather he planted things and let them grow—and then he painted them, painted them with all their vagaries of fleeting form, of changing colour, painted with loving care the nuances of the slowly moving day, the quivering atmospheric effects and the sunlight that was never the same. He would go over and over the well-known subjects, and always would they be different. His water-lilies he painted at every hour of the day, in every condition of light. Those Nymphéas he bequeathed to the French Government. They are housed in the Tuileries Gardens, so that in future one may always look upon the garden of Claude Monet, in the dawn, in the blaze of noon, in the soft shadows of eventide.

He has painted much besides, notably his splendid Cathedrals, but he will doubtless be remembered for his plein-air pictures above all. From the beginning he worked in plein-air: his famous Déjeûner sur l'Herbe and his Femmes au Jardin date from long ago. In spite of his desperate struggles side by side with Manet, with Pissarro, with Sisley, and the rest of the Impressionists, his was a happy life lived among light and colour. My admiration for Georges Clemenceau, with whom I have been privileged at different periods to come into close contact, is unbounded; and had I not resolved to keep politicians out of this book I would speak at length of the touching friendship of the two old men, politician and painter. Yet I cannot but think that the life of Claude Monet, consecrated unreservedly to art, was more fruitful than the life of Georges Clemenceau, consecrated mainly to action. On the day after the Armistice, when Clemenceau was regarded as the greatest figure in France, he stole away, I remember, from the shouting throngs to visit his friend at Giverny and to find repose in the beautiful garden.

Somebody has compared Monet with Anatole France. They both entered immortality while still living. They both stood on

the topmost heights in their later years and in some sense survived themselves. Yet the lot of Claude Monet seems to me to be the more desirable. The serenity of Anatole France, after a lifetime in libraries, was not comparable to the serenity of Claude Monet, after a lifetime in his garden, where pink blossoms hung against blue and white skies. How glorious this healthy existence in the open air, spent in communing with trees and flowers and all glad growing things, and shadow-flecked waters and sun-filled skies. There he walked in narrow winding paths between banks of flowering shrubs and ponds of water-lilies. In the garden were two studios and his house was a museum of paintings and mementoes. He was eclectic in his tastes. His collection included pictures by Corot, Delacroix, Manet, Degas, Pissarro, Sisley, Cézanne, Berthe Morisot, Signac. There were sketches by Constantin Guys and bronzes by Rodin. There were Japanese prints. There were souvenirs of Octave Mirbeau, of Mallarmé, of Paul and Victor Margueritte, of Eugène Carrière, whose dim paintings were the antithesis of his own. He had friends in profusion: all the writers and painters of his time.

Clemenceau told an anecdote which may be found amusing or sad: it depends upon the point of view. "I knew him when he had not enough money to buy tubes of colour. He had to raise funds, so he went to a well-known collector with a beautiful picture of trees dipping their leaves into the Seine. The collector condescendingly handed him fifty francs. Monet refused this inadequate price and he managed to carry on somehow. Years later the same collector saw the picture at Giverny and proposed to buy it. 'I would not sell it to you for 50,000 francs,' replied Monet. 'It is the picture that you thought was worth fifty francs.'"

Auguste Rodin was another giant of my early days in Paris. Like Monet he was simple. Like Monet, who, by a curious coincidence, was born the same day in 1840, he had to struggle hard for recognition. Like Monet, he came to be considered in his lifetime as the greatest exponent of his art and enjoyed his own apotheosis. Like Monet, he loved to live in gardens—in the garden at Meudon, in the garden of the Hôtel Biron. They looked not unlike each other—long-bearded patriarchal men who kept in their old age their robust appearance. I was moved as deeply by one as by the other, and felt that I was living in a great age. Rodin, the heavy-looking peasant, with strong shoulders, strong hands, thick neck, fleshy nose, unkempt grey

beard, well-worn clothes, was producing work of which Greece and Italy might have been proud.

Most visitors to Paris know the Eighteenth Century building in the shadow of the Invalides where Rodin worked: the Hôtel Biron, so called because the Maréchal de Biron owned it in 1753. The spacious garden had been allowed to become overgrown, but it has now been restored to something of its old condition; and not long ago M. Herriot officially dedicated it to the State. The formal hedges have been clipped, and the round pool relieved of the mass of earth that covered it. The place is now almost as it was when the house, in Napoleon's time, sheltered the Papal Nuncio and afterwards the Russian Ambassador. The convent, which occupied the place through almost the whole of the nineteenth century, was closed in 1905, and it was this closing which enabled Rodin to establish himself there.

Here are carefully preserved the marbles and bronzes, the drawings and sketches, which he bequeathed to the nation, and doubtless they will endure as long as the sculpture of Rome and Greece. In the residence at Meudon, the Villa des Brillants, are personal memorials and studies and a collection of antiquities; while in the Hôtel Biron (rue de Varenne) is his John the Baptist and the monuments designed for the Gate of Hell; there is the bust of Victor Hugo and the Man with the Broken Nose, and the portraits of Clemenceau and of Shaw; there are studies of the Burghers of Calais and of the Bronze Age; there is the Stooping Woman; there, in short, are the originals or the replicas of most of the best work of Rodin.

Rodin is as great as the greatest of French sculptors. Towards the end of 1917 he died, and I who had caught glimpses of him and had admired him beyond all modern sculptors felt that the world was poorer for his passing. His was a stormy life. He was accused of distortion and he was accused of moulding—two opposite faults, if faults they be, which cancel out. Nobody has written better about him than Gsell, who in a series of conversations obtained from him an account of his artistic beliefs, his sculptural methods.

The chief thing that Rodin discovered about modelling was that no part of the body is flat. It is curved and broken with hills and hollows and this gives light and shade. Moreover he put movement into most of his statues. Rarely did he represent repose. But it does not follow that the sculptor or the painter should represent human or animal figures as they are. Instantaneous photography would show motions which would appear wrong to our vision, and the cinema has emphasized this dis-

crepancy between actuality and perception. The artist should, generally speaking, concern himself with visible truths. But again one must not misunderstand this axiom. In portraits, above all, the artist should not strive to please or to produce a mere likeness, regular, puerile: an attempt must be made to achieve true expressiveness.

Lovingly Rodin would touch the marble, feeling its contour, its texture. "It is so beautiful," he would exclaim. That is one of the secrets of the artist: to love his material. But with his strong yet delicate hands he liked best to model in clay and to have his work cast in bronze. It was in detached pieces that he excelled; pieces which he could model with his own hands, this master modeller.

For many years he had to work in absolute poverty. Indeed he was obliged to act as a journeyman to obtain the wherewithal to purchase his marble. Often he complained that he had been unable, on account of this disability, to carry out his conceptions. He was sorry too because he considered statuary should be connected with architecture, and his greatest designs could find no place in modern architecture. When he was recognized as the finest sculptor since Houdon, he was tempted by large offers of money to do busts which were totally insignificant, or at least of insignificant persons, for large sums of money. To his real work he could only turn at intervals. Even his Balzac, which was ordered by the Société des Gens de Lettres, was rejected because it was not realistic enough. Ideal portraiture of the soul was not understood.

Often Rodin could be found at lunch in a little restaurant near Saint-Germain-des-Près. In passing I should say that I have made or renewed many acquaintances in the little restaurants of Paris. You will see a simple looking person, with perhaps a red ribbon in his buttonhole. You regard him closely and you find that he is a famous man. Nobody speaks to him. He eats alone in a quiet corner.

So Rodin escaped from his household, and went to a humble restaurant where he could be served with the old fashioned bouillon, with the soupe aux choux, with a wholesome dish of tripe, plain plats which recalled his peasant youth.

He could be lyrical about tripe. Michel-Georges-Michel approached him one day when he was enjoying a Rabelaisian dish. "Does it not look like the old stones of cathedrals? The Cathedral of Beauvais, for example? Few people know the Cathedral of Beauvais . . . This tripe, with its warm tones, with its crinkles, its crevices, makes me think of the Cathedral of Beauvais."

The great triumph of Rodin, after many years of neglect, of incomprehension, of official disdain, came when his wonderful Penseur—a seated figure, the head supported on the crooked arm—was officially erected before the Panthéon. That pleased him immensely. It was his consecration. Not many years after his death the Penseur was quietly removed from its appointed position. True, it was placed in the Hôtel Biron, but I have never understood why the authorities should have reversed their decision and have taken the Penseur from its predestined site before the mighty monument to the mighty dead.

He was annoyed because many people did not accept the detached portions of the human body which he was in the habit of moulding. For him it was self-evident that an arm or a hand or a leg is just as interesting as a complete statue. This is a proof that the part is sometimes greater than the whole. The torso, headless and limbless, has long been admitted. Again, people objected because he often left his creations apparently unfinished, struggling, as it were, to emerge from the shapeless stone.

Among his marbles and his bronzes, in garden and atelier, he lived, working in his white blouse: around him heaving flanks, moving croups, detached arms, strong torsos, exquisite nudes, heads which seemed to have a strange life . . . Apart from his art he remained in total ignorance of practical things. Of his misadventures, Marcelle Tirel, who was his secretary, has written at length with a multitude of illuminating anecdotes, as interesting as those which Brousson has related of Anatole France. At the end of his life he married his lifelong companion. The intrigues and troubles which marked his last years remind one of a Balzacian novel.

Antoine Bourdelle, whose name is inevitably suggested by that of Rodin, I have heard speak in unstinted praise of the Master. "He was not only the Master of us all, he was the artist of whom modern times should be most proud. Perhaps he was grander than the sculptors of antiquity, the sculptors of Italy. Michelangelo had a tumultuous and heroic vision. Rodin put the breath of life in the stone. He made his men and women truly human, and in that he stands alone."

Bourdelle did not acknowledge that his art resembled that of Rodin. While Rodin observed nature and tried to catch movement, Bourdelle does not believe that natural movement should be interpreted in marble or in bronze. Bourdelle is more methodical, more interpretative, more idealistic, if the word be allowed—he attempts synthesis and symbolisation.

When Rodin was working he had before him pencil and paper. The model came and went, and Rodin noted each gesture. Thus he obtained detached curves, splendid fragments, swift attitudes. He cut out his sketches, pieced them together, and designed his figures. "What would you call that, Bourdelle?" "I should call that The Dawn, Monsieur Rodin."

"And that?"

"Grief, Monsieur Rodin."

"And this?"

"Springtime."

Then Rodin would take his clay and create his maquette. Often the stone was cut by his workman of whom Bourdelle was one.

It has been suggested that some of the statues of Rodin were really made by Bourdelle. That suggestion arises from a misunderstanding of the art of sculpture. Bourdelle began by being an artisan—first an artisan in wood, and afterwards an artisan in stone. Rodin directed the work done from his maquettes. Always he would cry: "More human! more human!" Life was what he sought.

Rodin was tormented by the desire for perfect exactitude. Thus he tried to discover the exact measurements of Balzac. He tried to obtain the clothes of Balzac. It was Bourdelle who counselled him: "Forget all that. Conceive a Balzac from your imagination. Make a Balzac by intuition. Impose a Balzac by your genius." Rodin listened to him.

And so Bourdelle, modest as all great men are modest, protests: "I was only his workman."

Nevertheless Bourdelle, though different, is the continuator of Rodin, and the glory of the two men is inseparable.

Edgar Degas, who died in the same year as Rodin—1917—I never knew; but I worked side by side for some time with one of his heirs, and from him I learnt much of the painter. He was already successful when Renoir, Pissarro, and Sisley, were still seeking for something new. He was classical in spirit but he rallied to the banner of Manet. Claude Monet fixed his ideas. The Impressionist School was born. But Degas, though linked with these men by sympathy, cannot fairly be said to belong to their ranks. He remains isolated. His object was to interpret movement. Particularly did he try to catch the pose, the action of the ballet dancers. He was not, strictly speaking, a realist: there is nothing photographic in his art. Yet his purpose was to put on the canvas the precise position of his dancers—and of horses. He disdained coquetry and when he studied the female

nude he did not aim at beauty He truthfully set down intimate attitudes that sometimes shock by their ugliness; but that again was not his intention. His intention was to design, to reveal the plastic truth. Watteau, Prud'hon, Géricault, Ingres, have presented us with voluptuous figures. But in the work of Degas there is no temptation.

Toulouse-Lautrec had seized the fleeting attitude. But Degas had greater talent. An old celibate, he developed a caustic humour. Of a painter who was pompous in the academic manner but who displayed ardour, he said: "He is a fireman (pompier) who has caught fire." Of Gustave Moreau, whose highly ornamented mythological personages displeased him, he said: "Why does he put so many watch-chains on the Olympian Gods?" His success did not satisfy him. When one of his pictures of dancers brought half a million francs he exclaimed: "I am just as happy as the horse which has won the Grand Prix."

Walter Sickert, the witty English painter, has collected some of his mots such as: "I want to see my models through the keyhole." But he was an enemy of mere witticisms. When Whistler had spent an evening in being witty, Degas said: "Why do you act as though you had no talent?" In the same way he dismissed Wilde contemptuously in the phrase: "He seems to be playing at Lord Byron in a suburban theatre." He summed up the Cubists: "They are doing something much more difficult than painting."

For twenty-five years he lived in the rue Victor-Massé, and when, in the rebuilding of Paris, he was obliged to leave, he was disoriented. It was a terrible blow for him. Finally he found an apartment on the Boulevard de Clichy. Against so-called modern comfort he raged. Central heating he held in abhorrence: "Imagine houses in which it is equally warm everywhere! When I want to warm myself, I go to the fire. When I am no longer cold, I walk away from it."

He grew deaf and at last almost blind. He was indifferent to his clothes, wearing an old green battered hat, and a worn shining cloak. About Paris he wandered aimlessly, stopping sadly before the old houses that were being demolished. Things were changing . . .

If he painted dancers in their tutus, and nude women in their tubs, he would violently express his disgust for the liberties which were already taken by society ladies. What he would have done in these days of short skirts it is hard to imagine. Once in a salon he sat before a lady who crossed her legs and

agitated her foot, pressed it to the ground, and cried: "Will you remain quiet? You give me *mal au coeur*."

He bought pictures whenever he could afford them. But when he had acquired a Delacroix, for example, and had regarded it attentively for a time, he turned its face to the wall. He would sometimes examine his treasures, but he could rarely be persuaded to show them to others. Ambroise Vollard, a great collector of anecdotes, has recorded one of his remarks after he had refused to allow a unique lithograph of Delacroix to be photographed. "It has taken me twenty years to procure this Delacroix. Let others do the same. You will see, Vollard, that some day somebody will propose that Raphaels and Rembrandts shall be perambulated along the highways in caravans, on the pretext that everybody has a right to beauty."

A strange disagreeable man was Degas, but I am assured that at heart he was simple and sensitive, not without tenderness. If he disliked women, it was because he never overcame his juvenile shyness. If he seemed to affect the ugly, it was because of his love of truth.

And now I learn that it is proposed to interfere with the privileges of the abonnés of the Opéra where Degas painted his dancers. To the Foyer of the Dance the abonnés have long had access freely. They have for more than a century mingled with the dancing-girls in the forest of décors. Now they are obliged to descend by a passage and to mount a stairway, and there is something like a revolution in the peaceful haunts of the Dance. Ambassadors, Ministers, Generals, Deputies, have frequented the Foyer. Now they indignantly declare that they will not, at the bidding of the Administrator, abandon the privileges they have traditionally enjoyed. It is in vain that the Administrator points out that he has not closed the Foyer, but has merely forbidden abonnés to pass by the stage because of the danger of accidents when scenery is being shifted; and that conversations behind the stage are no longer tolerated in any theatre in the world.

Is it not enough to provide another passage to the Foyer with its immense mirror and its portraits of famous choregraphic artists? That Foyer has never really been frequented. The dancers descended from their loges without stopping in the Foyer. They remained behind the scenes, and it was there that they were joined by the Ambassadors and Ministers and other distinguished men. There, on the stage itself, in the wings, the dancers, while waiting their turn, made the acquaintance of their admirers. There Degas represented them in their white

tutus among the abonnés in evening clothes and tall hats. But everything changes.

We must not complain. Change is the law of life. In art what changes there have been in the past half century! Every change has been denounced. Manet was denounced, Cézanne was laughed at, Van Gogh was found incredibly bad. But they were at last understood. Today Matisse and Raoul Dufy and Dunoyer de Segonzac and Vlaminck and Utrillo and Picasso and Derain with their sense of colour, of decorative effect, of lyricism, of style, are held in high honour. To quote Pierre Courthion, Braque stands for good taste, Rouault for expression, Lhôte for design, Marie Laurencin for charm, and many others who might be mentioned have other distinctive merits. There have of course always been hordes of bad painters. There are hordes of bad painters in Paris today, but if there emerge from the ruck three artists, painters or sculptors, of the class of Monet, Rodin, and Degas, our generation too will be fruitful. Purposely have I chosen these three because they are essentially different in their matter and manner. It is not necessary that art should flow in a straight stream. Rather is its diversity a sign of its vigour, and so we need not despair of the apparent confusion of art in Paris today.

Chapter XXIII

OVERSEAS PAINTERS AND WRITERS

MEMORIES of British and American painters and writers whom I have met in Paris crowd in upon me as I write. There would be no end to this book if I systematically set down my impressions of them all. Therefore I must now content myself with a few names taken at random.

Sir William Orpen I recall from Peace Conference days: "Our Bill," as his friends irreverently called him. Pleasant and unaffected he remained in spite of his success; and he was exceedingly popular in very different circles. He used to keep a score of canvasses going at the same time; and I thought of him, when I saw the stacks of half-finished portraits of the statesmen, as a sort of juggler of painting. The potentates of the world who were re-drawing the boundaries of Europe, of Africa, and of Asia, were glad if he would consent to give them short sittings. Afterwards he had a house near the Bois, where he still frequently lives. A stylishly dressed, affable, witty and alert man, he attended every social function and every private party. There was, too, the American sculptor, Jo Davidson, stocky, black-bearded, who made busts of everyone of importance; and loved to spend an evening in Bohemian company. Augustus John made a great impression. I recall a bet he had with General Seeley as to who could produce the three prettiest women; but I forget who won the wager.

The personality of Augustus John is striking. Tall men have an advantage over their shorter brethren. John has remained erect, spare, stalwart, carrying himself with a swing like D'Artagnan—a splendid musketeer. He is perhaps the handsomest man I know, with great flashing eyes, long-lashed, soft yellowish hair falling loosely over his ears, and soft yellowish beard and moustache. His voice too is splendid—ranging from a soft singing cadence to a deep imperious boom.

There is a curious story, that I have never verified, to the effect that he owes his genius to a misjudged dive. As a boy he plunged into the sea somewhere off the Welsh coast, hitting his head on a rock. When he recovered—so runs the story—he was a different being. He had an assurance that had previously been lacking. He had even a touch of contemptuous arrogance. In his living he is defiant of convention, and in his art he is sur-

prisingly sure. Certainly he is to be ranked with the very greatest masters.

He was particularly pleased with my doctrine that one should not spend one's life in repeating the same thing as most men do. He has not done so—he has varied and evolved. For my part, I would change my profession every few years. Alas! one learns to do certain things and it is difficult to deviate from one's career.

He liked to linger in the Montparnasse cafés. His coming caused a flutter in the Quarter, but he always mingled freely with the struggling men and women and chose his company in eclectic fashion. He would talk for hours—humorously, wisely—about art and artists on the terraces. Often he would go down to Martigues, near Marseilles, where he painted hard. One year when I went to Marseilles, the first person I encountered as I came from the station was Augustus John, with Horace Cole, the most renowned of practical jokers. We went to a café to await John's wife and daughters who were buying Christmas presents in the town. There, on the Cannebière, he confessed that with all his experience painting was still the most difficult of arts, and in its pursuit he sweat blood. That is the mark of greatness.

He helped me to the conclusion that the current of modern art is back toward sanity. The eccentric productions of today which fill the hundreds of art galleries in Paris, the distorted figures, the flesh of noxious green, the weird apples and the lunatic landscapes, are a passing phase. This does not mean that we are returning to dull dead academic painting. It does not denote that the content of a picture should be other than modern. It does not imply an aping of the Primitives, a deliberate copying of the painters of any earlier epoch. The painter must be himself, but being himself he should know what others have done before him, and he should not for a whim, a mode, an advertisement, lightly depart from the accepted principles of painting.

Augustus John is undoubtedly as modern as a man may well be. He lives in his age and does not imprison himself in an ivory tower. His portraits could not have been painted at any other time; they smack of the present; they are alive and challenging. He cannot be suspected by painters or lovers of painting to be a reactionary in art.

A member of our company one day foolishly described Augustus John as an ultra-modernist. His indignant reply was: "I am a classical painter in the direct line of tradition." And

he maintained his point. He meant perhaps that he has really learnt the profession of painting. He has not, like some of those who endeavour to surprise us with new things, taken refuge in novelty merely because he does not know enough to paint straightforwardly.

He has mastered his craft better than any living painter. Yet those who rely upon some natural gift may indeed produce amusing things, and Augustus John summed this up when he said to me: "You should either know everything about painting —or nothing at all."

C. R. W. Nevinson was an English painter who frequently came to Paris and never failed to look me up. He painted several pictures in my studio. One of them has a curious history. He made, from the original sketch of my studio framed in long curtains with the skyline of Paris seen in the distance, a larger picture which Mr. H. G. Wells bought and presented to the Tate Gallery. In the larger picture was a nude figure which was not in the original. Thereupon I wrote to him a chaffing letter:

"You inform me that the large picture of my Paris studio, of which I have the original sketch has been presented to the Tate Gallery by H. G. Wells. It is gratifying to know that work done in my studio and representing my studio has a permanent place in a great London Museum.

"But in the larger picture you have placed a nude on the couch by the window. You will agree with me that there was no nude in my studio and no nude in the original sketch.

"As a painter, you have therefore taken liberties with your subject and in these days of scandal-mongering, when allegations are so lightly made and are taken so tragically, I think it well immediately to make clear that I have never, as the French say, so much as posed a rabbit in my studio much less a full-sized naked female model.

"These things may be permitted to artists, but not to writers, and my Paris studio, like most studios nowadays in the French art capital, is a respectable writing man's studio.

"I, therefore, vigorously repudiate the figure on the couch."

One would have thought that everybody would have taken this protest jocularly, but it got into the newspapers and aroused heated comment. I was assailed from unexpected quarters. A Curator with no sense of humour became both scornful and indignant. Happily most people laughed and for months the incident was the favourite joke of Paris.

The son of the well-known writer, Nevinson has passed

through several distinct periods. With Marinetti he helped to invent Futurism. In the war he painted vivid battle scenes. He has been attacked by the academic painters because of his originality, and he has been attacked by the revolutionaries because he settled down to traditional ways. New York will not easily forget his great triumph when he exhibited there in 1920.

He has more anecdotes than any man I know. I will tell one of them. At the Café Royal in London, where the painters resorted, Nevinson was approached by a girl who asked him if it were possible to have a ticket for the Chelsea Art Ball. "I don't think you would like it," said Nevinson. She insisted. He still tried to excuse himself. "Why should I not like it?" she questioned. Nevinson thought of an American word that was still not generally understood in England. "Because," he said solemnly, "it is rather highbrow." "Highbrow!" she exclaimed, "I didn't know it was as bad as that. I am a respectable girl, and I can't, of course, go to a highbrow ball."

I made notes of a long conversation with him on the tendencies of art in the world after his visit to a number of capitals. Although I do not altogether endorse his views, I think they are interesting. We were sitting together on the terrace of a Montparnasse café. "There is little that is good in post-war France," he said. "France, in spite of great artists who do fresh things, is at bottom intensively conservative. The floraison of pre-war days, though extravagant, was excellent. It did not seriously affect the stolid Beaux-Arts but it was a healthy revolt. Now the Fauves have become respectable and respected. They merely emphasize the stylism that is almost universal. You get extremists, but they simply represent the other side of conservatism. They are not inspired by any real motives, any serious design. I have tramped through scores of galleries at the Grand Palais. There are over 7,000 exhibits in the two chief Salons but there is hardly anything that stands out. There is just a repetition of the same anecdotes, the same nudes, the same landscapes. Even the Indépendants are academic in a less competent manner.

"There are groups galore. That is the pity of it. The so-called wild men establish their rules to which they conform with appalling fidelity. They steadily imitate what they or their leaders have already done. French artists are always afraid of getting ahead of their clan. Coteries will hardly speak to other coteries. Production becomes stereotyped. Instead of movement there is crystallisation."

This is certainly true of most of the French artists. Those

who succeed will never do anything that is not in the style to which the public is accustomed.

"What of England?" I asked.

"In London," I was told, "there is a freedom, a thrusting forward, an absence of scholasticism, that in view of the criticisms which are often made is really surprising. We rail at the Academy, but the academic spirit hardly exists in England. Each man works as he pleases. The Academy itself is becoming a liberal institution. Everybody is talking about the rejection of pictures by men with considerable names who have become famous for their story pictures. The Academy is astonishing: I cannot refrain from referring to the election of Augustus John; and the inclusion in its ranks of such men as Sir William Orpen, brilliant even when he makes concessions to popular taste, is a portent. We have no standard, no academy in the strict sense, no schools. We are individualists.

"It should not be forgotten that although many new things have come from France, although France has dealt fine blows against officialism, the inspiration has often been found in England. The impressionism of Monet, for example, is really Turneresque. The starting-point was Turner."

"And New York?" I questioned.

"I have been twice to New York recently, and I find America open to suggestions. Personally I have been well treated in America. Nevertheless, New York is twenty years behind. It has not found itself. It is neither academic nor individualistic. It is tolerant. It has no traditions, but then it has no expression of its own. Art in America is inchoate. America has no serious sects—it is a sort of freethinker in art. American artists live in colonies—there is here in Paris a great American colony, though there is practically no English colony. It would not be far wrong to say that there are plenty of painters but no artists. The painter is true to type; the artist must stand alone.

"In England dealers are only shopmen—they sell what they receive and do not attempt to control the artists. In France the dealers make their demands and the fashion must be followed. When an artist is boomed he has to produce exactly what is required of him.

"It is owing to this preference of the bourgeois who buys pictures in France for conformity to a recognized standard, that French painters are seeking an outlet in England. You have observed what an extraordinary number of Frenchmen are showing their works in London. Partly it is to escape this dictation of the dealers. London and New York are probably

the only places where pictures are really being bought. British purchasers are guided by nothing but their own taste, and everybody who has a certain amount of money purchases at least one picture. There is a chance for every kind of artist. British artists have no need to complain of this competition of French artists, for every picture that is sold prompts the purchase of three or four more.

"The British Government," he added, "deserves great credit for the manner in which it assisted art during the war. The war pictures that were officially ordered were by men of the most diverse qualities and characteristics. Governments usually have a penchant for what is purely academic, but the authorities in England had no prejudices. The official artists included men as far apart as Orpen and myself. Exhibitions of our work were actually held in the Academy, where I had resolved never to exhibit. The Canadians, too, encouraged modern tendencies in official art, choosing such men as Augustus John and Wyndham Lewis. I think that the progressive spirit, the individual spirit, in England has gained greatly.

"When I was in Prague I found that Czecho-Slovakian artists were doing interesting work, but the Balkans in general follow the French. Germany will profit by having been temporarily cut off from French art, which unduly influenced it.

"As for Russia, the artists are recognised and fed and go on producing, but it is a terrible thing to have no audience, merely to stack up piles of pictures, to be working in the void. Nothing can be so discouraging as to have no raison d'être. Songs cannot be sung in the desert, books cannot be written to be locked in a drawer, and pictures cannot be painted mechanically, without appreciation, without interest in their selling and their subsequent fate."

Jacob Epstein, who made the monument to Oscar Wilde at Père-Lachaise which shocked Paris, was also among my Parisian acquaintances. Although he was American he stayed away from his native land for a quarter of a century. I liked him because he was simple. "I have never understood," he told me, "why I am always in hot water. I do not seek publicity. Publicity seeks me. It is no good to me and it makes me angry. I am a sculptor and therefore to some extent dependent on public commissions. Now a committee will hesitate before it gives me a job. It is afraid of a scandal. Never have I consciously provoked a scandal. Little did I think that my Wilde monument would upset Paris. My figures in the Strand which caused such discussion were high up on a building almost out of sight. My

conception of Christ was perfectly sincere and was only pounced upon by the newspapermen because it made a story."

Afterwards there was another controversy that lasted for months about his Hudson Memorial in Kensington Gardens. Epstein is fated, whatever he does, to arouse the ire of the Philistines. His American visit was eminently successful. His views of America and of England are as interesting as those of Nevinson, so I will set them down. He sees no reason why an artist should not keep his soul in the United States. He is there encouraged. America does not wait until an artist has grown old. It appreciates younger men. It does not ask that art should be pretty-pretty. Americans are inquisitive. In a spirit of curiosity they seek to acquire knowledge, while English folk are apt to be sceptical of anything new. He had high praise for the architecture of America: the skyscrapers reminded him of the Aztec pyramids. But he objected to the mania for decoration which is manifesting itself—the desire "to make skyscrapers look like giraffes in lace-caps and frills." Refinement—so-called—is the curse of art.

John Storrs, an American sculptor of an ultra-modern kind, was for many years a friend of mine in Paris. His father was a Chicago merchant who accumulated a considerable fortune. It was left to him, however, through a Trust Company, on condition that he regularly resided in Chicago. Now John Storrs had long made his home near Montparnasse, and had come to love the atmosphere of Montparnasse. He refused to leave his home and was prepared to forego the fortune. There was a long series of lawsuits with the object of ascertaining the meaning of "regular residence." The definition that was given was that he should spend eight months of the year in America. For some time he held out, asserting that Paris was the proper place for an artist. When I last heard of him he was making his peace with the controllers of his fortune.

Among the writers, Michael Arlen amused and pleased me. Somewhere in the early post-war days I ran across him in the Tour Eiffel, a literary and artistic restaurant in London. He was, as he told me, then poor. His first book brought him in about thirty pounds from England and fifteen dollars from America. Then came "Piracy," which had the Tour Eiffel for background. "It actually sold eight thousand copies, which was considered to be extraordinary for England."

He is a young man not over-strong in appearance. He cultivates a determined air of smartness. We were a party of men at dinner one evening. Somebody began to chaff him on his

Eastern origins. He tried to brazen it out—which was obviously the only thing to do.

"Yes, I am an Armenian—the only known survivor of that race."

One of the company made an offensive remark. I saw him turn pale and slip away from the table. I followed him and discovered that he was really upset: tears were in his eyes. For Michael Arlen, in spite of a cynical exterior, is exceptionally sensitive. I was genuinely sympathetic and we became friends.

I did not, however, see him for long. He went to Hollywood and there reports were constantly reaching us of his engagement. He was engaged to an actress every other day. Pola Negri was picked out as one of his fiancées. Eventually he was married at Cannes to the Countess Atlanta Mercati of Greece.

When he returned, he came to my house and laughed heartily at these newspaper marriages. "No, really I did not inspire them. Once the reporters get after you you need no press agent. They pursue you, they invent stories about you, they will never leave you alone."

"The Green Hat" capped the success of "Those Charming People." It was translated into many languages. It had a great run as a play.

"I'm going to spend more time on a good book. They say my style is merely tricky. I had a bet with myself that I would make a fortune before I was thirty. I have succeeded, and now I am going to show that I am not only a popular author but a careful artist."

When I come to think of it I have rarely met a writer of talent who would not have liked to be an entirely different kind of author. Michael Arlen had the happy chance of being in tune with his age. The post-war generation was money-mad, and recklessly seeking artificial amusements became bored and immoral and snobbish. Arlen painted these unpleasant people and they liked it. They like the gin and jazz. They like the mock intellectuality. But they are beginning to understand that snobbery is foolish, cynicism is absurd, and a shower of epigrams is not style.

Michael Arlen once said: "I'm not really a fashion. I'm a disease—an international disease. Nobody likes me. Most of the people who read me say: 'How horrid, or how silly, or how tiresome.' And yet they read me. They've got to, don't you see? That's really the cleverest thing I did. I saw the rather feverish state of the body politic. And I disseminated my poisonous prose right and left. They did not catch it at first. But

the great majority have fallen by the wayside. And how they hate it."

His real name is Dikran Kouyoumdjian. He was born, I believe, in Bulgaria and was brought to England at the age of four. His elder brother Roupen became a great friend of mine. The family made money in business in the North of England, and Roupen came to Paris to live. He was a capital companion. At one time he ran a bookshop which was a paradise for bibliophiles in the rue de Richelieu. It was afterwards taken over by Robert Boyd—who had accumulated a large fortune and retiring from business became a generous patron of the arts: an altogether lovable man of high culture.

Gertrude Stein was the first of the American writers to settle in Montparnasse. She has lived in Paris for more than a quarter of a century without returning to the United States. Once seen she will never be forgotten. She reminds me of a Cistercian monk. Her mannish face and clothes, her strong commanding air, make her what is called a "character." I encountered her in the cafés and also in the salons of the district. The young men whom she powerfully influenced regarded her as their Master. But most people thought her work incomprehensible. It is easy to parody her manner, though perhaps one leaves out something that is there. She repeats her phrases endlessly. There were two of them, she writes. Two of them together. Two together. There were two. Two together there were two. Together two. And then pages later one finds the same phrases still being repeated. An enormous book of a thousand pages called "The Making of Americans" turned round and round variations of this kind. It is incredible that anybody ever read it.

Once I asked an admirer what it all meant. "Have you read her early work 'Three Lives'?" was the reply. I confessed that I had not. "Then you cannot discuss her. She has shown that she can write the most delicate conventional prose."

My response was that the question was being begged. How does one justify the later unintelligible prose of Gertrude Stein by appealing to her earlier prose? Does not, in fact, that appeal to her earlier prose condemn her later prose? Is it not a confession? This kind of defence is very common in Paris. If you object to the distortions of a painter, deformation is championed on the utterly illogical ground that sometimes the painter does not distort! The contention is quite worthless. The appeal from Philip drunk to Philip sober has here no validity. Doubtless there is a method in Miss Stein's madness. When she pub-

lished her "Essay on Composition as Explanation," in "transition," the pages were interchanged. Nobody noticed it. It did not seem to matter in what order the sentences ran, but Gertrude Stein protested and the essay was republished as written. I read it both in the new and the old pagination. So far as I could see there was no difference.

Once I gave a reading of Gertrude Stein to a party of friends. There was much merriment and I was urged to hire a hall and publicly read for an hour that there were two of them, two together, together two, were two, two were, and so forth. It would have been funny to have watched the faces of her disciples. I do not doubt that they would have taken it seriously and have applauded me. Surely it is a pity that a woman with the talent of Gertrude Stein should fall into such nonsense and should induce "advanced" persons to accept this jumble of counters as glittering and precious coin of the realm. She employs what she calls "the continuous present and using everything and beginning again." One of her critics—who entirely approves of her style—tells us that Miss Stein "has altered the whole face and complexion of English prose." It appears it is all due to the war. Had it not been for the war the reading public would not have caught up with Miss Stein. She writes:

"And so the art creation of the contemporary composition which would have been outlawed normally outlawed several generations more behind even than war, war having been brought so to speak up to date art so to speak was allowed not completely to be up to date, but nearly up to date, in other words we who created the expression of the modern composition were to be recognised before we were dead some of us even quite a long time before we were dead. And so war may be said to have advanced a general recognition of the contemporary composition almost thirty years." War has much to answer for. The admirers of Miss Stein claim that she has inspired or discovered Sherwood Anderson, and Carl Van Vechten in writing; Matisse, Picasso, Juan Gris, in painting; Virgil Thompson and Henrietta Glick in music. I do not know whether they have ever acknowledged the debt. I am told that for those "who are equipped with faculties for the appreciation of Miss Stein's prose, no explanation is necessary; for the others, no amount of explanation will effect conversion. Most of Miss Stein's prose sketches are abstract patterns which make no pretence of touching reality at any point. Others, with an element of reality, have carried rhythmic word-play, word-association,

and evocation, to interesting extremes. Her prose affords a unique pleasure to those who can enjoy abstract art."

The magazine "transition," published in Paris, contained much of her work. Its two Editors were Eugene Jolas and Elliot Paul. Elliot Paul was an excellent writer long before he began to meddle with these ideas of composition. And, moreover, he could play simple sentimental ballads such as "Home, Sweet Home," on an accordion. I never understood how he could reconcile his love of these harmless diversions with his scorn of rhymed verses and of intelligible prose. As for Eugene Jolas, he remained on about the same level whether he was writing in English, French, or German. He was a surrealist—whatever that may mean, for it appears to mean anything that is unorthodox. For that matter I read in "transition" painfully banal, and therefore, I presume, orthodox pieces, such as one produced when one was a boy. Alas! this modern movement savours of juvenility.

Irish writers abounded in Paris. There was James Stephens, who had an apartment in the rue Campagne-Première—a gentle elf-like spirit who is loved by all who are capable of appreciating exquisite prose and fertile fancy. In the salon of Abel Chevalley, under the presidency of Viélé-Griffin, James Stephens "read" his own verses. He did not recite them, rather did he sing them. His eyes were closed and his head and body moved in time with the measure. It was like an incantation.

"If you have a toothache or are in love," he said with quaint Irish humour, "you lose your time in trying to explain your sensations to those who have never suffered from toothache or from love. One can only understand what one knows already."

So it is with poetry. So it is with the pure prose which he writes. So it is with the dreams of this dreamer of Erin. A winsome visitant of the Quarter.

Norreys Jephson O'Conor I bracket with Stephens. In our talks together on Ireland's literary renaissance I found that he was untouched by the works of James Joyce. He dwelt with the legends of his race. He loved the Irish myths with their humour, fantasy, and lyricism. The old dim heroic days furnished a means of escape from the present. In "Battles and Enchantments" he extols the tales of distant years in beautifully simple language:

> In stained thumbed vellum pages
> Are tales of distant years,
> And songs that nameless poets sang
> Of huntsmen, hounds, and spears.

O lovely land of Ireland,
Be this your gift to men:
Bring back the beauty of the world
And give us dreams again.

These Irish expatriates do not forget Ireland. The real Ireland does not call to them, but the Ireland that they can carry with them surrounds them with a wall of beauty and separates them from an unsatisfactory environment.

There were some of the Abbey Theatre (Dublin) dramatists in Paris: particularly do I recall Arthur Power and his beautiful wife. There was Frank Harris, an Irish-American—for he always claimed American nationality and Irish origins. Many of my respectable friends said unkind things of him. They warned me of his seditious tendencies, and his ardent liberalism, of his later pornographic books sold under the counter. They may be right. I do not know, I do not care to know, of these aspects of Frank Harris. They may or may not be indefensible, but I prefer to think of the Harris I knew, whose eyes would fill with tears when he spoke of beauty, who was moved sincerely by misery or oppression, who recited to me for hours significant passages of Robert Browning—passages full of moral meaning and of noble purpose—an incomparable conversationalist, a supreme artist of the short-story, a skilful limner of contemporary portraits, a wonderful biographer (as in his Life and Confessions of Oscar Wilde), a fine interpreter of Shakespeare, a passionate earnest man, who may often have erred but who, in his erring, was intensely human. I was happy to be of some service to him on occasions when he, with unfailing pugnacity, placed himself in difficult situations. One of his sayings was "The best is good enough for me." It has many meanings, both material and spiritual; but on the whole it is a good motto. "The best is good enough for me."

A resident of the Quarter from the pre-war days, Helen Henderson has always been an eminently likeable though a severely independent person, declining to enter the cliques and the claques, pursuing her own way steadily, an excellent art critic, a careful writer with a strong personal style, an authority on French architecture, a pleasant and accurate gossiper about many cities in which she has "loitered"—New York, Boston, London, and Paris—and lastly a charming biographer of Diane de Poitiers.

Theodore Dreiser, who made a short appearance in Paris, and even pushed on to Moscow, could hardly be anything but American in the narrowest sense. Admirers of Dreiser—of

whom I am one—must forgive me for making this assertion; but indeed it is self evident that whether in Paris or in Moscow Dreiser was living and thinking in the American scene. Dark and gloomy he was on his Paris visit and shrank from the usual round of drawing-room entertainments imposed on American visitors. He had just won his first great and belated success with "An American Tragedy," which everybody was reading. Everybody proclaimed its author to have produced the most substantial novel that has yet come out of America. There was plenty of criticism of the clumsiness of style, of the verbosity, but for the work as a whole, with its steady cumulative effect, unstinted praise. Success is of course a relative term. Dreiser, who had passed middle age, had long been well known and had almost been worshipped by certain classes of American readers. But this was his crowning triumph. He remained dark and gloomy.

In appearance he is big and burly, with a heavy German head. In the midst of the fleshy face are soft brooding grey eyes, and sometimes one catches a glint in them, the glint of the fighter, the glint of the observer, the glint of a man who, in spite of his bulkiness, his slowness of manner, his brooding expression, is really alert. I gathered that he had been oppressed by his youthful experiences, that his newspaper beginnings had been depressing, that he had to overcome many difficulties in the publication of his books, which were condemned without a hearing on Puritanic grounds. Dreiser is a liberal, but he seems to me to be also a pessimist. What is the purpose of life? He shakes his head mournfully. What is the purpose of his work? I do not know; and I confess I should like to see a glimpse of hope shining through his dourness. Life is better than he believes.

The Middle West! The Middle West, with its large and rugged uncouthness, its grim gropings, may be the most fruitful artistic soil of the United States; and Dreiser, with his large and rugged uncouthness, his grim gropings, is a symbol and a portent. It may be that the Middle West is the real America, not New York and Boston and the Eastern seaboard that alone most visitors to the United States know, and that, indeed, alone many Americans know. Certainly Dreiser is conscious of the pride and the independence which have been left in the pioneers of the Middle West, and he knows their limitations—their intolerance and narrowness, their recent strugglings towards a particular culture which shall be essentially American and not European. Dreiser in his books spares us nothing—no sordid

details: he has not learnt how to eliminate, he sees his personages and their environment as a whole, he "reports" with convincing precision, with remorseless perseverance. H. G. Wells called "The Genius" a large and dull piece of ineptitude; other critics have dwelt upon the slovenliness of his writing; but many of us find that with all his faults Dreiser can claim kinship with Balzac, Tolstoi and Dostoievsky, and we endorse the verdict of H. L. Mencken who said: "He stands isolated today, a figure weatherbeaten and lonely, yet I know no American novelist who seems so secure or likely to endure."

Chapter XXIV

IN THE SHADOW OF THE ODÉON

PAUL VALÉRY has had an astonishing career. As a young man he wrote a few poems, a few essays; which though they revealed a marvellous mastery of words were too laboured, too obscure, to attract the attention of any readers save those who themselves practised the art of preciosity. He did not hold them in high esteem himself. They were exercises in the manner of Mallarmé. Indeed somebody has called him—the joke is feeble but the criticism is good—Paul Vallarmé.

Just as the schoolmaster of the rue de Rome had to earn a living, so had Paul Valéry. It probably never occurred to Stéphane Mallarmé that his little enigmas in verse could bring him an income. He wrote them because such was his pleasure, such was his conception of literature. He did not write to acquire fame or fortune. Why should the public pay its tribute of praise or of pelf to a man who offers it a tiny handful of curious syllables unintelligibly arranged? Mallarmé had too much good sense to expect any kind of reward for his literary conundrums, and he went on giving his lessons to primary pupils for a pittance.

Since his death his admirers have wept bitter tears over his hard lot. It has become the fashion to affirm that society owed a substantial pension to Mallarmé, and should not have allowed him to spend his energies in teaching dull youngsters. For my part, I have derived, in common with most lovers of French literature exquisite æsthetic thrills from Mallarmé, whom I hold to be a true poet of high quality. But what has that to do with the public—or at least with the public of his day, which could not be expected to understand his charming riddles? The poet wrote for himself and for his friends, as a means of escape from his humdrum daily toil, as a diversion, a divine diversion if you will, but a diversion nevertheless, which no more concerned the public than if he had chosen to pass his evenings in constructing symbolical geometric figures.

Jules Renard said of Mallarmé: "His ideas are like window-panes. One of them would let in the light; but placed one above the other they form an opaque substance through which it is impossible to see."

One evening Mallarmé read a sonnet to his guests. They were

obviously pleased. Mallarmé was displeased. "They understood immediately," he confided to an intimate friend; "I have failed. I must rewrite the sonnet and veil the thought so that it is accessible only to superior intelligence." Valéry apparently profited by this lesson.

Yet it is certain that a poet cannot fly from the public, and at the same time complain of public apathy. In Paris it is a constant theme for debate whether the hermitic poet or prose writer should be taken on trust by the public and relieved from the ordinary disabilities of moneyless men. But if the public itself cannot recognise the merits of an author who despises it, who is to decide whether he is great? Surely not an academy or an official body of any kind. Such a body would probably overlook a Mallarmé. Such a body might choose entirely worthless persons. No, there seems to be no method of picking out the Mallarmés and of placing them in a well-provisioned ivory tower. They must submit to the common law of mortals—that is to say, they must earn their living by supplying services that are in demand, and pursue their private art in their leisure moments.

The quarrel between those who would pick out the Mallarmés and pension them, and those who would leave them to work out their own salvation, is perennial. Clément Vautel, a popular newspaper writer and successful novelist, seems to have common sense on his side when he insists that society has no special concern with the Mallarmés. Deeply as I sympathise with these men of extreme artistic sensibility, who produce in the course of their lives a few carefully wrought pages for themselves and for a little élite, I cannot but agree with Clément Vautel that there is no practical way of separating them from the herd, and that their secret recreations, however elevated, do not give them a right to be relieved from their ordinary occupations.

I have dwelt upon this problem because, in the beginning, the case of Paul Valéry closely resembled the case of Stéphane Mallarmé. Like Mallarmé, Valéry has produced, in the whole of his career, scarcely sufficient to fill a decent-sized volume. What he has given is exquisite, but I cannot believe that the greatest writers spend many years in bringing a dozen pages to perfection.

When one thinks of the supreme writers, of Shakespeare or of Cervantes or of Goethe or of Balzac or of Tolstoï or of Keats, one has not the impression that their genius trickled out in a thin stream. One thinks of them as of torrents, irresistible,

enormous. They are forces of nature. The force may be diverted away from literature; but force it is, and force it remains. Genius is robust and overwhelming. It is a mighty river carrying bad and good on its bosom. It is not a tiny tinkling fountain. We may admire the fountain, we may be enchanted by it, it may correspond to our taste and to our mood. But to compare it with the broad river is absurd. It must be taken for what it is, it must not be depreciated but neither must it be magnified into what it is not.

Villiers de l'Isle Adam used to tell of a dream which he had one night. He made his own cigarettes, and he dreamt that he took out of his pocket a little packet of cigarette papers. As he was about to tear off a feuille he read on the cover of the packet these words: "The Complete Works of Stéphane Mallarmé." Thereupon he opened his eyes, and found upon the bed the masterpiece of Mallarmé in four or five pages, "L'Après-Midi d'un Faune."

Valéry comes from the Mediterranean country. His family lived in Montpellier and he was born in Cette in 1871. Young Frenchmen who have literary inclinations long for Paris. He came to Paris when he was about twenty. Soon he was known in a limited circle. Those were the days of Symbolism and other 'isms which multiplied rapidly. Verlaine, the Bohemian poet, Jean Moréas, the Greek poet, and Mallarmé, the obscure poet, were surrounded by their disciples, who met in cafés and in salons. The most famous salon was that of Stéphane Mallarmé. Valéry was an assiduous frequenter of these "Tuesdays" in the rue de Rome, and was seduced by the poet who, leaning on his mantelpiece, delivered himself of long monologues. He began to contribute to the little independent reviews which are usually short-lived. His poems, printed in these ephemeral periodicals thirty years ago, have since been collected.

Himself he declined the vain titles which the little group was only too ready to attribute to men who—in the satirical phrase of Oscar Wilde—spent a whole afternoon in putting in a comma and another whole afternoon in taking it out again. I have known Valéry for a number of years, and I have listened to his talk, and I am convinced of his superior intelligence. With his subtle superior intelligence he did not fall into the error of so many others in the 'nineties. He regarded his poems as pleasant and salutary exercises, but he did not give them greater importance. Keenly interested in the new movements, already capable of a rare and lofty self-expression, he nevertheless stood aside from the intrigues, the ambitions, the rivalries,

and the follies, of a group which took itself too seriously. Presently he saw that to be a poet did not absolve him from the ordinary duties which a man owes to himself. There were those who considered that there was something glorious in starving in the intervals of drinking, and of being miserable in the intervals of composing verses. Valéry disappeared from the little chapels and for twenty years did not publish a line.

Those who remembered him would ask sometimes what had happened to Valéry. They would talk of his talent and would compare him to Arthur Rimbaud who, at the age of seventeen, was described as a genius, and at the age of twenty, after having published "Le Bateau Ivre," an astounding poem, gave up writing and went to Abyssinia where he earned a living in trading. Rimbaud's disgust with the literary cliques, in which he had suffered, is perfectly understandable. Perhaps the moral is that literary cliques destroy more talent than they develop.

Valéry gained his livelihood as the secretary of a business man and he occupied his leisure with mathematical studies. Then, after a score of years, he reappeared. He was drawn back into literary milieu. Pierre Louÿs, the author of "Aphrodite" and the Lesbian "Chansons de Bilitis," early in 1917 wrote to his friends: "You are one of the few who remember Paul Valéry. I bring you the good tidings of his return to literature. In a few days he will publish a new poem 'La Jeune Parque,' which I believe to be a masterpiece."

Afterwards Valéry published a slender book of verses, "Charmes"; Platonic dialogues, "Eupalinos ou l'Architects"; and essays which are collected in the volume "Variétés." In all, his production would scarcely make up a fair-sized English or American book.

Let me not be misunderstood. Everything that Valéry has done is beautifully chiselled, and there are certain pages, notably in his dialogue on the Dance, which are, I think, as good as anything in French literature. I would not measure talent by the yard-stick nor weigh it in scales. Catullus has left us little, but that little is superb. Alfred de Vigny has bequeathed us a few poems which are sublime. But it is time to react against the suggestion that a poet is great in inverse ratio to his production —that the less he offers the finer he is. Somebody has called Valéry the Voice of Silence. But, according to his own paradox, he would have been greater had his silence been more complete. This easy doctrine was naturally accepted as the justification of a crowd of insignificant poetasters who thronged the literary

cafés which I used to frequent. The difference between these poetasters and Valéry is that they were unintelligent, whereas Valéry is undoubtedly a prince of the intellect.

In "L'Ebauche d'Un Serpent" he wrote:

"The Universe is a blemish
In the purity of Non-being"

In his "Soirée Avec M. Teste" he furnishes a precise definition of his aspiration: "Every great man is marred by an error . . . Genius is facile, fortune is facile, divinity is facile. I would simply say that I know how these things are conceived." In other words it suffices to possess potentiality. To be, not to do, is the highest aim of the spirit. What matter whether he expresses himself to others, provided there is no incoherence in his own soul? According to this theory, however, the best books are those which are not written.

Into the long controversy which regaled Paris between the Abbé Brémon and Paul Souday it is impossible to enter here, for neither the opinions of the Abbé Brémon nor Paul Souday are clear. The Abbé Brémon, Member of the Académie Française, attempted to define pure poetry, and set up the poetry of Valéry as an example. Pure poetry apparently should be devoid of sense. It should consist only of sound. It should reach the heights of music—or, better still, the spiritual heights of an unuttered prayer. Paul Souday, the literary critic of the Temps, laughed this contention to scorn, regarding poetry as an expression of intellect, and praising Valéry's poetry precisely because it is intellectual.

It seemed to me that both these distinguished controversialists were talking nonsense. The Abbé Brémon better understands the true spirit of poetry than his adversary, for true poetry contains meanings which cannot be defined, which cannot be discovered in any analysis of the words employed, which have an analogy with music. Yet the medium is language, and language must have sense. The poet cannot discard the dictionary and set down a series of arbitrary syllables, as Brémon's theory, carried to its logical extreme, would suggest. On the other hand, Souday, like so many Frenchmen, is assuredly wrong in thinking of poetry merely in terms of the intellect. That is a typical French error.

Valéry is below medium height, slender, well-groomed, slightly affected in his manner: hair, now growing grey, parted in the middle, black eyebrows, clear grey eyes, straight nose, a Charlie Chaplin moustache, a firm chin completing a hatchet-

shaped face. He dangles a monocle which he seldom uses. He speaks slurringly from closed teeth.

We were a little company in the salon of the Institut International de Coopération Intellectuelle, myself, Louise Weiss, Hélène Vacaresco, Julien Luchaire, Auguste Gauvain, and Paul Valéry.

"I have been offered an interview which you are supposed to have given on the subject of woman suffrage," I informed him.

"An interview?" he cried: "I have never given anything to anybody on that subject."

He laughed—he laughs easily—twirling his eyeglass.

"It was sent to me too," said Louise Weiss, the talented Directrice of the literary and diplomatic review, L'Europe Nouvelle. "I passed it on to Marcel Ray, who is my Literary Editor."

We proceeded to outline the ideas he was said to have expressed.

"The exact opposite of what I think," he laughed. "Now I remember. A young man called on me a few weeks ago and I received him courteously and had a short conversation with him. There may have been something said about women but . . ."

Thereupon Gauvain, the Foreign Editor of the Journal des Débats, stroked his grey beard and told us that the interview was a form of journalistic enterprise that he always held in suspicion. How could anyone be sure that he was reproducing the veritable remarks of his interlocutor? And even if the precise phrases were remembered, they might contain merely ephemeral notions, in contradiction with the general thought of the speaker. In a long career he had rarely tried to reproduce in inverted commas anything said to him.

How dexterously Valéry caught up this theme, how he played with it, how he expatiated on the fragility of the spoken word, the vanity of utterances blown into the air, shining, colourful, evanescent as bubbles. I will not attempt to reproduce his monologue here. But it was delightful to watch the iridescent tints, the changing shape of his spontaneous fancy, light and gay as it floated into the air and there disappeared.

The Rumanian poet, Hélène Vacaresco, was enraptured. She became lyrical as only she can. Julien Luchaire, towering over us, his little boy's face bright with smiles, preserved silence as is fitting for the head of the International Institute whose

business it is to bring together men and women of many opinions.

Always does Valéry talk freely: if he writes sparingly it is not because he has no "facility"—it is because, as I have indicated, he is afraid of "facility." "The literary world," he said on one occasion, "is full of people who do not know what is worth saying, but who feel the urge to write. They write whatever passes through their mind—it costs nothing and has no value. So they have learned to substitute for lack of thought stronger and stronger words. They overburden their words. Their whole effort is to substitute words for ideas."

To Frédéric Lefèvre, who specialised in interviews, Paul Valéry nevertheless unbosomed himself. He talked interminably, he talked on a multitude of subjects, he talked admirably. All this was written down and made a larger volume than any volume of Valéry.

The case of Lefèvre is curious. I first began to hear about him when he contributed critical articles to an insignificant sheet entitled "La Vache Enragée" published at Montmartre just after the war by a group of chansonniers. Excellent commentaries they were. Then he suddenly became the Editor of "Les Nouvelles Littéraires," and for a long time his interviews, "Une Heure Avec . . . ," were a weekly delight. They were collected in book form and we had the views of everybody that mattered on every possible topic affecting literature. Still they came, these interviews. As each publication destined to create a momentary stir appeared, Lefèvre published an opportune interview.

But presently he was attacked. It was asserted that his interviews were too timely. They were denounced as clever publicity. Worse was to be alleged. It was alleged that Lefèvre had grown tired of his job, and merely asked the persons he selected to write their own interview with him. He simply broke it up into paragraphs and inserted in italics a few questions of his own. Often in fact his questions consisted of a row of dots with a question mark at the end of the line.

It must be confessed that the attack itself suggested that there were disappointed authors and disappointed publishers whom Lefèvre had neglected. Yet for certain of the so-called interviews it is probable that Lefèvre was a complaisant peg on which authors hung their own advertisements.

The episode was amusing. This is what one of his critics wrote: "He uses more shoe leather than ink. He abandons the pen for the door-bell. He passes his job to those who are to

benefit by his publicity." These methods finally diminished the value of the Lefèvre interviews.

Paris loves to have its idols and then to demolish them. Perhaps it prefers the process of demolition, but it could not satisfy this sadistic instinct if it did not first manufacture its idols. Already there is a reaction against Valéry. That is not astonishing. It is much more astonishing that Paris chose as idol such a difficult author as Valéry.

The phenomenon is explained by the war. The younger men felt the instability of material things. They grew impatient of discipline. They demanded short sharp intense pleasures. It did not matter whether those pleasures were understood. Moreover, they preferred that æsthetic pleasures should be separated from reality. Erik Satie, the composer of startling dissonances, Picasso, the Spanish painter who encouraged the taste for deformation, Jean Cocteau, with his incredibly disjointed and apparently meaningless notations, were more than ever accepted as bringing something new into a jaded world. Cubism and enigmatic poetry flourished. Paul Valéry was discovered. He had something of the quality of Satie, Cocteau, and Picasso, but his poetry and his prose, obscure, secret, was cast in a perfect traditional form, and of his technical skill there could be no question.

To those who had known Mallarmé, Valéry was hardly a revelation, but Valéry happened to be on the spot. When he was presented, about 1917, as at once novel and classical, he satisfied every demand. The salons began to take him up. Snobbery quickly did its work. Here was a hero. The delicate subtle art of Valéry, which could mean nothing for a frivolous society, was adopted by a frivolous society. France had a great poet—abstract certainly, but musical and of infinite grace, sensitive, audacious, and philosophical. He was little read perhaps, but he provided food for conversation. He was more than a poet; he was a living specimen who could be pinned down. He corresponded to a need—a need of the literary chapels and of the fashionable ballrooms. It was not necessary to understand him—that would have reduced the interest in him: it was sufficient to admire him. So Paris could show that it still loved *belles lettres*.

Nobody was more surprised than Valéry. He knows his own limitations. He knows, despite the Abbé Brémon, that his poetry is not true poetry because it is not spontaneous and is not irresistible. It is not inspired, it is entirely self-conscious. It is carefully elaborated. It is, again despite the Abbé Bré-

mon, purely intellectual. It is composed in the same spirit as a mathematician poses a problem, as a metaphysician builds up a theory. It is a kind of esthetic geometry. The paradox of Valéry is that his careful performances appeal to the ultra-modernists who would break every rule that Valéry is at such pains to observe, and that they appeal to champions of pure poetry though his poems are, with their superb verbal gymnastics, at the opposite pole from pure poetry.

He was elected to the Académie Française which is peculiarly susceptible to dignified literary modes. The Académie Française had suffered from the reputation that it was made up of politicians and generals and conventional novelists. Now it would show the world that it had a poet in its ranks—a representative of an abstruse, elevated, precious kind of literature.

He succeeded to the chair of Anatole France. Here again was a piquant contrast. Anatole France, lucid, smooth, a writer of sweetness and light, was demoded. His throne was overturned, and that of Valéry set up in its stead. Valéry was well aware of what was expected from him. It is the custom for the newcomer to pronounce a eulogy of his predecessor. But how could Valéry praise Anatole France? He did not. He dexterously refrained from mentioning the name of Anatole France, and in his general observations there were polished sneers at the clarity of the Master. That may be suitable for the moment, but hereafter it will hardly be forgiven Valéry.

A great business is done in France in beautiful limited editions, and of course Valéry's works in their rarer dress are much sought. There is also a great business done in manuscripts of such writers as Valéry. In this connection, I have heard of a certain author who spends a fair proportion of his time in copying his own manuscripts, and in manufacturing autographs which will fetch a good figure.

Jules Romains, after belonging to the Abbaye of Mercereau, belonged to the group which frequented the bookshop of Adrienne Monnier, but of recent years the founder of the Unanimism has been independent of all schools. He is a heavily-built man with the face of a Roman Emperor. He resembled Mussolini but in the early years his hair was cut in Japanese fashion—smooth black hair plastered down over his forehead. His pseudonym fits him. It suggests a Roman solidity, and it applies not only to his mask but to his work which is solidly constructed in accordance with the rules he has himself laid down.

It is worth noting that most of the writing men in France adopt pseudonyms. Anatole France was named Thibault, and

Pierre Loti was known in the navy as Julien Viaud. Rosny was a name adopted by the brothers Boex, and Claude Farrère in private life should be Captain Bargone. The most spiritual of Parisian story-tellers, Henri Duvernois, conceals his un-Parisian cognomen of Schwabacher. The brother of Pierre Louÿs was the French Ambassador to Saint-Petersburg, plain Georges Louis. If you pick up the earlier books of George Duhamel you will find that they are signed Denis Thévenin. Andrée Viollis, the leading woman journalist of France, is Madame de Tizac; Rodolphe Bringer, the humourist, is Bérenger; Tristan Bernard is really Paul Bernard; Camille Marbo, the novelist, is the wife of the former Minister Emile Borel; Zévaès, who has written the best history of the Third Republic, is Alexandre Bourson; Maurice Boukay, the song-writer, when he became Minister turned out to be Charles Couyba; Urbain Gohier, the polemist, is known to his concierge as M. de Goulet; Pertinax, the diplomatic writer, is André Géraud; Séverine is Madame Guebhard; Marcel Hutin is Hirsch; Colette is Madame de Jouvenel; Courteline is Moineau; Madame Aurel is Madame Mortier; Saint-Pol Roux-le-Magnifique sounds better than Paul Roux, and Nozière better than Weyl; Romain Coolus is popular with a theatre-going public which would not recognise him if he were billed as René Weil. So one could continue, for it is the rule rather than the exception to present oneself to the public in France under a nom-de-plume.

My first meeting with Jules Romains—or Dr. Farigoule—was on the evening when, in Adrienne Monnier's bookshop, he read from manuscript his play "Cromedeyre-le-Vieil," which was afterwards produced by Jacques Copeau at the Vieux-Colombier and called general attention to the author. Afterwards we encountered each other at theatrical first nights and on one occasion he caused me much trouble.

All his friends know him to be an unrepentant practical joker. This proclivity is exercised at the expense of everybody. In his ordinary conversation one hardly knows whether to take him seriously or not. Thus when he fled from the crowded center of Paris and built himself on a piece of waste land by the Buttes-Chaumont a simple but comfortable pavilion, where he lived with his books and the trees of a tiny garden, he amused himself by raising snails which he had brought expressly from Burgundy. One day he was bewailing in a drawing-room his difficulties as a breeder of snails. It appeared that the Burgundy snails, fat and magnificent, excellent for eating, persisted in crossing themselves with the local variety of the Buttes-Chau-

mont garden! The seriousness with which he related his annoyance particularly impressed a society lady who ventured timidly:

"With all these troubles, M. Romains, your park of snails cannot bring you in a great deal of money?"

"Oh," replied Romains with a modest air, "that is not my only source of income."

Similar incidents were of frequent occurrence, but at last Jules Romains, speaking as a scientist, announced triumphantly that he had discovered a method of restoring sight to the blind. It was not by opening their eyes. They were in future, according to Romains, to see through their nose.

One would have thought that the scientists would have laughed him to scorn. But no. Solemnly he proceeded to demonstrate that there is an extra-retinal vision, a paroptic sense. He took a number of subjects, blindfolded them, and showed them that they could read or discern colours through a multitude of little cells which seem particularly to abound in the nose, though they are said to cover the whole epiderm. To see through our eye was a mere habit we had acquired. We had only to develop our "ocelli" and presently we would be able to dispense with our eyes. In point of fact, various experiments which he conducted appeared to bear out his contention. People whose eyes were bandaged affirmed that they nevertheless saw.

It would be possible to account for their vision in several ways but it is not my purpose to furnish hypothetical explanations. There was an immense publicity about the so-called discovery. The doctor who had attended Anatole France, and thus had a reflected glory, affirmed that the experiments were, if not conclusive, at least significant. Thereupon I was asked by a famous English scientist to inquire into the matter. I confess that I was sceptical and wrote to him suggesting that the whole thing was a joke. Yet he would not be put off. Were there not pictures in the Paris Illustration? Was not a book published with a full account of the investigations?

I do not think that Jules Romains will be remembered for his scientific work. He will be remembered for his literary work. That literary work has taken every form—lyrical, narrative, dramatic. The great public knows best his "Knock," which is a satire on the doctors in the true spirit of Molière; as "M. Le Trouhadec" was a satire on professors.

The theory of Unanimism is that the writer should not take an individual for his subject but should take a group of individuals. He should not take the crowd, which is amorphous, but

he should reveal the soul of a group of persons. A group of persons waiting for an omnibus is an entity, with a single thought; a group of spectators watching a boxer being knocked out has a single emotion. These and other groups feel, at least for a second, unanimous in the literal meaning of the word. In "Knock," it is not so much the doctor who interests us as the villagers. It may be recalled that the doctor took over the practice of a man who had no patients. The villagers had forgotten that they might be ill, and had lost the habit of seeking medical advice. But the new doctor, with his knowledge of group psychology, announced that he would give consultations without payment. Thereupon, out of curiosity, the villagers began to visit his dispensary. They soon realised that they were "ill," and thereafter the doctor became indispensable. For morning until night he was kept busy: the entire village was perpetually "ill."

For my part I think "La Mort de Quelqu'un" is Romains' best narrative. There he shows how the neighbours are affected by the death of "somebody." In "Donogoo Tonka" he has constructed a sort of film scenario, which permits him to show different planes of his romance, with, occasionally, their brusque fusion.

A young man who ably assisted in the editing of the Navire d'Argent and who used to call on me in the Boulevard Raspail was Jean Prévost. I became interested in his work. He will surely go far. He is still under thirty years of age. Not until 1924 did he leave school. The following year he published two volumes, and presently he gave us a savoury "Vie de Montaigne." Like many of the younger men he is a sportsman. Intensely practical, intensely curious, he combines the three essentials, maturity of intelligence, youthful physique, childlike heart. He seems to me, this vigorous young man, one of the best types of the new generation. It is possible to confute his opinions, but they must be respected. Thus one day he said to me: "I do not consider myself an artist. I regard artistic creation as a means of arriving at greater exactitude. Beauty cannot be detached from utility. That is why architecture is the noblest of the arts. Literature is the study of particular men, as philosophy is the study of man in general. I admire my contemporaries, but I mistrust them. Only that which endures when the mode has passed is real. Montaigne, for example, I regard as a man of our own day, still alive."

There is sound sense in these observations.

One of the most notable men of these days and these groups was Blaise Cendrars. He was wounded in the war, and displayed

frightful courage in cutting off his right hand before he coolly walked back to the nearest surgical post. Cendrars is an indefatigable traveller. He went everywhere, but especially did he love southern America. In his writing he invented a system of shocks and cries and rapid analogies. Pages of "L'Or" are colourful, ardent, moving, irresistible. He rejoices in steamboats, oceans, the sun, distant places, negroes, birds, beasts, and all exotic things. He seeks diversion in strange spectacles: he is, in the fullest sense, a sensualist, and though he cares nothing for words and nothing for ideas his words glow and vibrate and somehow ideas emerge from the whirling kaleidoscope. In real life he is, as in his books, vehement, sonorous, changeable, passionate.

Luc Durtain also revolved around the Odéon; he swore by the motor-bicycle, and I heard incredible accounts of the speed he had attained. If there was a literary celebration somewhere outside Paris, one would hear the sudden explosion of an engine, and there would appear the giant form of Durtain, his calves bound in horizon-blue cloth. He has expressed the sensation of immense peopled spaces; he has painted an astonishing fresco of modern life in "Douze Cent Mille"—a legend of a working man who comes into a fortune, and is exploited by industrialists, bankers, notaries, and their womenfolk. It is like an Image d'Epinal, coloured and crowded.

Jean Cassou, silent, solitary, a Bearnais who happened to be born in Spain—at Bilbao, the country of Don Miguel de Unamuno, Spanish patriot exiled at Paris—was the secretary of Léon Bérard, the Minister of Beaux-Arts, before he became a writer and entered the Odéon group. If he looks out of his great goggles, silent and solitary, he chants in his books la joie de vivre: he is a modern romantic, unafraid of the two great events in human history, love and death.

Such are a few of the authors whom I saw in the shadow of the Odéon, which stands in the midst of that teeming Quartier Latin, which from time immemorial has been the cradle of literary talent.

Chapter XXV

THE TWO ACADEMIES

THERE are two Academies in France. The Académie Française is by far the older. It is by far the larger. It is by far the more official. It is by far the more important in the general life of the nation. But the Académie Goncourt, comparatively new, restricted to ten members, in some revolt against stereotyped traditions, unconcerned with the general life of the nation, is nevertheless more influential in French letters. It is more alert than the Académie Française which, by its functions and its composition, can scarcely pretend to lead but can only judge by the accepted standards, and cannot encourage audacity and originality. The Académie Goncourt, on the other hand, makes a point of selecting for honours those books which show a vitality, a novelty, that may shock and startle but that keep intellectual curiosity awake and that keep literature alive.

In 1635 Richelieu founded the Académie Française; and Mazarin housed it in the Institut de France. There were gathered together, from the earliest days, not necessarily the French writers with the clearest claim to fame, but persons in favour at Court. Under the Monarchy, it is true, the arts were encouraged as they are not today; and there any complaint on this score would be unfounded and perverse. Nevertheless, though the King and his Ministers prided themselves on their enlightened patronage, it was inevitable that "good taste" should be the real test applied to authors: that is to say, there had to be a conformity to accepted rules both in matter and manner. Thus the tone was set. The Académie Française has never departed from it. Speaking generally each member is *bien pensant,* right-thinking; polite, polished, unimpeachable in his social outlook. Of course there are exceptions; there are men who impose themselves on the illustrious company. Anatole France, correct enough in the literary sense, but at one time suspect in the social sense, was elected because he dominated French letters. And for other reasons Clemenceau was elected, though he did not even put himself forward as a candidate. But these are special cases. Paul Bourget, a great writer but a typically conservative social thinker, has declared that the last

ramparts of Conservatism in France are the Army, the Church, and the Academy.

This point can be strengthened by adding that Anatole France ostentatiously stayed away from the Academy; and that Clemenceau has steadily refused to take his seat and pronounce the usual eulogy of his predecessor.

Certainly other members have long hesitated to present themselves at the formal reception. But that is another story. Literary men are not, as a rule, rich in France—or anywhere else for that matter; and while they appreciated the honour of being numbered among the Forty Immortals—and indulged in all kinds of intrigue to achieve their purpose—they found, when they had succeeded, that they could not afford to purchase the uniform that must be worn on ceremonious occasions.

It is a green embroidered uniform, worn with an ornamental sword and cocked hat. The dress costs dear nowadays—from five hundred to one thousand dollars (£100 to £200). So when the French writer has attained his ambition he then reflects and asks himself whether he can really afford to garb himself in this queer attire. I have known several Academicians, poor though celebrated, who have long neglected to take their seat under the cupla because they deemed the privilege too expensive.

Often, however, the friends and admirers of the newly-elected Academician subscribe, and present him with a beautifully engraved sword. That is already much, though why the sword should symbolise the pen I do not know. But while it is good form to give a man a sword, it is contrary to etiquette to give a man a pair of trousers.

Certainly in some instances the uniform has been borrowed for the occasion; and I am credibly informed that second-hand uniforms are sometimes to be purchased. Indeed I have seen Academicians whose clothes were a perfect disgrace, baggy, shapeless, threadbare. Perhaps the Academy should be allocated funds for its wardrobe.

Yet I would not convey the impression that only authors are Academicians. The Academy is composed of men distinguished in many different fields. The writers by no means predominate. The Academy is a Salon—a drawing-room of politicians, soldiers, cardinals, lawyers, and proconsular persons. It is sometimes called *le dernier salon où l'on cause*.

A good deal of publicity is constantly given to its compilation of the official dictionary. It is amusing to learn that the Academicians, solemnly assembled, have decided that *midinette* is not (or perhaps it is?) a recognized French word, though every-

body uses it and that *football* is (or is not) incorporated into the French language. For this grave work the Academicians are paid something over a hundred francs a month (about four dollars, less than £1.) Now, as I write, I learn that for the first time since 1795 their salary is to be raised—to five thousand francs a year!

One of the objects of the Academy was "the firm establishment of the rules of language." It was "to make French not only elegant but capable of dealing with all arts and sciences." Therefore the Academy must be correct rather than inspired. It is so far behind with its dictionary that when the volumes are published the public has already upset the "rules of language" so "firmly established"; and independent writing men, while admitting the Academy is a corrective, urge that language is fluid not fixed, is living not dead, should be forceful as well as elegant.

I would sometimes attend the ceremony of installing a new Academician. The sight is interesting. The company is "brilliant"—that is to say, it is composed of people whose names often appear in the papers; and such a company, however dowdy it may be, is always described as brilliant. Long carefully prepared addresses are made by the sponsor of the new Academician and by the Academician himself; and they are printed *in extenso* the same afternoon in the Temps and the Journal des Débats, filling three or four pages.

The Academy also distributes no fewer than 160 literary prizes every year.

I have always regarded the dinner of the Revue des Deux Mondes as a kind of annex to the Académie Française. René Doumic is not only the Editor of the foremost French magazine, but is the Perpetual Secretary of the Academy of Immortals. He has been good enough year after year to invite me to his dinners where I am, I think, the only English-speaking writer among the motley throng of Academicians. Let me set down some of the best known names as they occur to me. There was Marshal Foch who, when everybody else wore their decorations conspicuously would wear none at all. I sat next to him at table the other day and he would talk of everything except the war. There was Camille Jullian, a wild-bearded myopic man, regarded as an authority on the Celtic origins of France. There was Pierre de Nolhac, the historian of Versailles, and the Abbé Henri Brémond, advocate of pure poetry, and Mgr. Baudrillart, Director of the Institut Catholique, with his little red Cardinal's cap. Others included Joseph Bédier, who

has the most profound knowledge of French literature of the Middle Ages, and whose version of La Chanson de Roland is final; Henri Bergson, the author of Creative Evolution, long the idol of fashionable ladies who repeated his phrases of "vitalism" and "élan vital" without perhaps understanding his case against those who would treat life as a mere mechanical process; Henri de Régnier, long-faced, monocled, a careful artist in prose and in verse; Georges de Porto-Riche, the dramatist, with his wealth of waving hair; Maurice Donnay and Henri Lavedan, successful playwrights, François de Curel who tried to put ideas on the stage, Eugene Brieux, the constructor of sociological discussions in the theatre before Bernard Shaw. Gabriel Hanotaux is an able historian, and Henri-Robert is the most eloquent pleader in the courts. Marcel Prévost made his mark many years ago for his studies, penetrating and lively, of the modern woman, and he is now the Director of the Revue de France. Henry Bordeaux, one of the favourite authors of the bourgeoisie, may be regarded as a disciple of the great master of the French novel Paul Bourget. But not only is Bourget a painter of souls, a psychologist of high rank, a "problem" novelist: he is, in my opinion, the greatest critic since Brunetière. In this same salon, too, I met René Bazin, like Bourget in his seventy-fifth or seventy-sixth year: Bazin the joy of my youth, the mirror of the French provinces, the singer of the soil. I wish I could linger on each of these names for they have all of them a vital significance in French letters, and anecdotes concerning them crowd in upon me.

The Comte and Comtesse de Fels, who own the Revue de Paris, also did me the honour of inviting me to a similar annual dinner which they organised to bring together the writers who have contributed to the success of their publication. Again I was the solitary Anglo-Saxon among the famous Frenchmen; and I remember the witty discourse of Raymond Poincaré on such an occasion. I have written the biography of Raymond Poincaré, but I have not done justice to his wonderful gifts as an after-dinner speaker. Some day I must devote an additional chapter to his humour. Nobody who has not heard him pleasantly playing with ideas, expressing them in exquisitely fashioned phrases, on these intimate occasions, when he feels at home, and free from the cares of office, the responsibilities of statesmanship, can realise how facetious he can be in the most approved French style—facetious and yet serious, clothing a fundamental truth in a lambent garment of *spirituel* language.

I have dealt with several of the leading Academicians in this book, but I must speak of Jean Richepin, the most striking man I have ever known.

France has had better poets than Jean Richepin, but she has never had, since the days of Villon, a more picturesque poet. When first I saw this remarkable man he carried himself with magnificence. His hair, his beard, and his moustache were grey, but they fell in a multitude of little curls. He gave himself Olympian airs, and he had not lost the athleticism of his youth.

To tell the truth, that noble head was a trifle too noble, just as his verses were too rhetorical. But what romantic force he represented! When I read his "Chanson des Gueux" (which may roughly be translated as "Song of the Outcasts") I was thrilled; but a second reading convinced me that he was writing at the top of his voice. He was only twenty-six when he produced it, and Paris was shocked. He meant Paris to be shocked. It was a pistol-shot which he fired, like some showman in an open-air fair, to attract attention.

Immediately there was an uproar. The newspapers were scandalized. Some of them recognized his extraordinary talent, but deprecated his daring. Others ignored the real beauty of the poems, and described the work not only as a bad book, but a bad action. There was a demand for his prosecution.

France has, for a country which enjoys the reputation of literary liberty, an unfortunate record of literary prosecutions. Flaubert was prosecuted for "Madame Bovary" and Baudelaire was prosecuted for "Les Fleurs du Mal." These two books have since been widely accepted as the greatest achievements, one in prose, the other in poetry, of the nineteenth century. It is not necessary to endorse that verdict, but certainly they must be ranked very high. The authorities who tried to suppress them have been rightly ridiculed.

Again, French Puritanism—for the French can, at intervals, be Puritanic too—pounced upon "La Chanson des Gueux." Jean Richepin was condemned to a month's imprisonment, and the deprivation of his civic rights. In prison he wrote a little volume of short stories, "Les Morts Bizarres," and other verses which were afterwards to be included in "Les Blasphèmes."

Thus did he win celebrity. Réjane, not long afterwards, consented to appear in his play, "La Glu"—Réjane one of the finest actresses France has had during the Third Republic—and forty years later Réjane was to find her last *rôle* in a film of which the story was written by Richepin, "Miarka, La Fille à l'Ourse"—"The Girl with a Bear."

Moreover, Richepin was later to be received as a member of the conservative Académie Française, and was to appear in the green embroidered uniform, sword on hip, under the cupola. He was to be regarded as the best of all the lecturers on literary subjects at those gatherings of young girls of good families which are organized by "right-thinking" associations in Paris. It was a strange transformation. But in spite of his apotheosis, there clung about him the legend of his early days.

He liked to imagine that he was the descendant of wandering gipsies, that there was in his blood a nomadic strain. That he loved an errant life and all its wild connotations cannot be doubted. He was born in 1849, in Algeria, the son of a military doctor. He followed his father from garrison to garrison. Doubtless he was influenced by the Arab and Berber world, but for a time at least he pursued ordinary studies at the Lycée Charlemagne in Paris, and then entered the Ecole Normale Supérieure. He left before he had completed the course, and installed himself at the corner of a street with a little machine for fried potatoes. He hung out the sign:

Frites—
Jean Richepin
Ancien Elève de l'Ecole Normale.

This method of advertising his fried potatoes was not to the taste of the school.

We next find him with a troupe of Bohemians, wandering from town to town. The troupe in the fairs promoted wrestling matches, turned somersaults, gave hypnotic exhibitions. Richepin fell in love with a gipsy girl. When he was no longer in love he left the troupe.

Next, he was assistant teacher in a Paris school. The pupils were as old as Richepin. They mocked and refused to listen. Suddenly Richepin brought down a violent fist on the desk and made the following speech:

"Messieurs, I must ask you to believe that I am not here for my pleasure. If you are bored, I am still more bored. But I have to earn my living. Do you intend to prevent me? Then I will ask you to come and tell me so, face to face, on the Place du Panthéon, where I will wait for you after the class is over. It is understood that, as we are of practically the same age, it is with our hands that we will exchange explanations."

The method was efficacious. The class was conquered. After the studies were over, the young teacher taught his pupils how to march on their hands, how to turn somersaults, how to lift

weights with their teeth. A popular and promising teacher was the youthful Richepin!

During the Franco-Prussian War he enrolled himself in a regiment of *franc-tireurs*. He returned to Paris to witness the terrible excesses of the insurrection known as the Commune. The Communards led by the great painter Courbet pulled down the Vendôme column, burnt the Ministry of Finance, the Cour des Comptes, the Hôtel de Ville, the Palace of the Tuileries, and two hundred other buildings. "The intensity of the flames," related Richepin, "was such that I could read by their light." He added:

"According to legend, I declaimed from my roof, the night that Paris was going up in flames, the Ode in which Victor Hugo depicts Nero watching the burning of Rome. This is not true. Simply did I point out to a comrade the analogy between the burning of Rome, as described by Hugo, and that of Paris as seen by us."

After the Commune his adventures began again. He joined a travelling circus. He helped to unload ships at Genoa and at Naples. Finally, he returned to Paris and mixed with literary circles—François Coppée, Raoul Ponchon, Maurice Bouchor, and Paul Bourget. He wrote in the Radical and Socialist journals.

His first article in *La Renaissance* was a eulogy of a celebrated wrestler of the time, whom he considered to be a true image of Art—of Art as it should be, massive and powerful. There was some strong writing against the rich and happy of the world. Richepin proclaimed himself an incorrigible rebel. It was at this epoch that he composed his "Chanson des Gueux" and made himself the "Bard of the Beggars." Perhaps it is the proof of a generous nature that a man should be Radical in his youth; and that he should become Conservative in his age may be a proof of his wisdom instructed by experience. At any rate the process is fairly common.

Here are a few of his *pensées*:

"If God is the author of the world, He has written a book which is still in its first edition."

"I saw yesterday a butcher of La Villette, starred with stains of blood—he looked as though he had been rolled in rosettes of the Legion of Honour."

"Life is a cigar which should be smoked by the thick end."

"Workers have one day of repose after six long days of labour. It makes me think of those spiders whose fragile body is borne by six long legs."

They are not very terrible, as probably they seemed to be at the time. But his plays and stories were full of colour. They told of vagabonds and great skies and vast seas and poverty and strange adventures and irrepressible temperaments. They showed a lively intelligence, an unusual opulence, a verbal truculence. Richepin invented startling images, rhymed easily, was an indefatigable improviser, and his verve rendered him popular.

He was tumultuous and vivid, but as he grew older he became more and more rhetorical, more and more artificial, more and more facile. Fecundity is not everything, though it is much. Now and again he has accents that are veritably inspired by the people and therefore appeal to the people. You will find those accents, above all perhaps, in "Le Chemineau"—a play which was translated into many tongues, and afterwards made into an opéra-comique as was his "Don Quichotte."

Jacques Richepin, his son, is a successful playwright, and his daughter-in-law, Cora Laparerie, a popular French actress.

In the Café Napolitain one day I greatly shocked a little literary circle who were discussing the recipient of the latest Prix Goncourt by describing the members of the Académie Goncourt and the writers to whom they annually award a sum of money and an abundance of publicity as Goncourtisanes. It would certainly be foolish to dismiss them all by a single contemptuous word. There are among the members and among the prize-winners men whom I esteem. Yet in the bulk the phrase is not altogether undeserved. Members and prize-winners alike have been helped to live by the generosity of the Goncourts, and many of them have, as writers, little title to fame. As literary men they are posthumous protégés of the Goncourts. Without the publicity of the annual luncheon one would scarcely hear of some of the members. Without the imprimatur of the Académie Goncourt the names of half the prize-winners would scarcely have been heard outside their own family circle. For a season they are well-known but afterwards most of them lapse into obscurity. Among those that I recall who have, with varying talents, made a more or less permanent place for themselves are Henri Béraud, Marcel Proust, Georges Duhamel, Henri Barbusse, the Brothers Tharaud, and Claude Farrère. There have been others who have figured for a time in the public eye and who have had an ephemeral *succès de scandale*.

Moreover some of the selected authors would have been just as prominent had the Goncourt arbiters ignored them—as they have ignored many good men. Does anybody suppose that an

enterprising person like Béraud would have remained in the background? Proust would have found his admirers—and did long before the "Goncourtisanes" ever heard of him. Henri Barbusse was hailed by the public as soon as "Le Feu" began to appear in the newspaper L'Oeuvre during the war.

There is much to be said against prize-giving. In America and in Great Britain there are similar associations which try to guide the public taste and which crown selected writers. Sinclair Lewis, who refused to accept the Pulitzer Prize, held that awards and distinctions are dangerous to literary freedom. In France the younger men are induced to write with one eye on the jury. They do not express their own individuality. They do not obey their own conscience. They try to do what is fashionable, what will appeal to the mentality of the Goncourtisanes. Hence in spite of a superficial diversity, there is an essential sameness about the novels which are pouring out of the presses in unprecedented quantities.

If a writer happens to be lucky enough to catch the eye of the judges he is sure of selling a hundred thousand copies of his book. If he does not, his book will probably fall flat. Even if the chosen book is better than the rest, it is, in a normal year, not much better; and it is obviously unfair that attention should be directed to a single work to the detriment of others. In the majority of cases the single work is, of course, not better than the others. It is frequently worse than a dozen novels of the same vintage.

Yet these awards are sometimes excellent. The Prix Femina-Vie Heureuse went in 1905 to Romain Rolland for his Jean-Christophe; and in 1919 to Roland Dorgelès for Les Croix de Bois; and in 1925 to Joseph Delteil for his Jeanne d'Arc. One might also pick out Edmond Jaloux, besides Marguerite Audoux for her simple and sincere Marie-Claire.

As for the Académie Française, the Grand Prix is usually awarded for the complete works of a known author such as Francis Jammes and François Porché and Camille Mauclair. The Prix du Roman has often gone to insignificant writers, though Pierre Benoît, Francis Carco, Alphonse de Chateaubriant, and Joseph Kessel, justify in some measure this distinction. The Renaissance discovered Paul Morand, and the Grand Prix Balzac went to Jean Giraudoux. These names perhaps redeem the rest; though they would surely have been heard in any event.

The case against prize-giving is strengthened by the suspicion that there is sometimes intrigue. A few years ago a new prize

was founded. The columns of the newspapers were filled with praises of the generosity of M. ——, a manufacturer who wished to encourage literature. Presently the award was made. Nobody had heard of the fortunate author, and his book was unusually poor. Then it was revealed that the generous manufacturer had literary ambitions. He had adopted a nom-de-plume. His own book had won the prize. The giver of the prize and the recipient of the prize were identical!

That is an extreme instance, but it is inevitable, when prizes become the best kind of advertisement, that publishers should come upon the scene and endeavour to influence the award. Their methods may be subtle, and we may generally acquit the juries of corruption or of conscious favouritism. Nevertheless the juries have their personal relations with the publishers. There are, besides, social influences. Usually the day after the award the prize-winning book is displayed in all the bookshops with a printed band announcing its success; and in the literary journals long interviews are printed the same day. These things seem to point to a curious intelligent anticipation.

The members of the Académie Goncourt meet for their annual banquet in a restaurant which I have frequented for many years—the Restaurant Drouant in the Place Gaillon. Often have I eaten in their salle—a square room decorated in pale blue, with a whorled ceiling and panels with triple lamps. It is perhaps the best banqueting-hall in Paris. There the fare is excellent, and it is a joyous meal for the men who are aware that the eyes of France are upon them. There are ten of them. They are paid under the will of Edmond de Goncourt about six thousand francs a year, and the membership is worth while in many ways.

The anecdotes which I heard recounted after each déjeuner were amusing. The Academicians sometimes complained bitterly of the ingratitude of their laureates. It used to be the custom to convoke the author to the premises of a notary in the rue des Pyramides to congratulate him and to hand him the money with fitting ceremony. One laureate actually wrote that he was too busy, and asked that the money should be paid to his account in the Crédit Lyonnais! Georges Duhamel, during the war, appeared in splendid uniform. His automobile was at the door, with a soldier in attendance. The Secretary, then Jean Ajalbert, was piqued. "Taxicabs," he said, "were very rare, and I had to go on foot to catch my train." He thought Duhamel should at least have offered him a lift to the station. The candidates—there are over two hundred of them

every year—send éditions de luxe of their novels to the members; but with rare exceptions the prize-winners never afterwards send copies of their works to the Goncourts.

Elémir Bourges was in the habit of condemning all the candidates except his own with the contemptuous sentence: "C'est du Maupassant!" As each book was proposed he would remark: "C'est du Maupassant!" When he left the restaurant after the award he would repeat: "Tout ça, c'est du Maupassant!" An ingenious calculator has reckoned that 1,984 books have been condemned by Bourges in this phrase: "C'est du Maupassant!" The Academicians have each their peculiarities. J. H. Rosny ainé, now President, likes to have several ballots in order that he can cast his vote in succession for various candidates. J. H. Rosny jeune is chiefly anxious not to vote like his brother. Léon Hennique would not vote for the same candidate as Henri Céard; while Henri Céard threw in his lot with Léon Daudet—unless Gustave Geffroy, a man of the Left, as Daudet is a man of the Right, put pressure on him to vote for a negro or an anarchist. Hence the *mot* of Lucien Descaves (himself a permanent absentee): "When Céard gives satisfaction to Daudet, he cannot for three months lunch at the Gobelins (of which Geffroy was Director) and when he votes with Geffroy, Madame Daudet deprives him of dessert at dinner for several weeks."

I suppose the Goncourts, who founded the Académie, are little read today. They have their place in the literary history of the Nineteenth Century, and their legacy helps to perpetuate their name. They too are beneficiaries of the brotherhood of Goncourtisanes. The younger brother Jules died in 1870. The elder, Edmond, survived him for twenty-six years. He produced a great deal, working largely upon the notes of Jules. His style continued to develop curious characteristics. It broke away from accepted rules of syntax. The Goncourts invented a temperamental language, "all shivers and nuances," as Charles Le Goffic says, "tormented, incorrect, variegated, with neologisms, and with rare epithets, violent and precious at the same time, which, instead of containing the expression of their sensibility in orderly manner, only serves to exasperate it."

The Goncourtisanes could doubtless increase their heritage were the unpublished portion of the Goncourt Journal to be released. This unpublished portion lies hidden in the Bibliothèque Nationale—as a portion of Oscar Wilde's De Profundis lies hidden in the British Museum. Astonishing efforts have been made to suppress it, for Edmond was embittered and set

down damaging statements about his contemporaries. These statements may be true in part, though it is likely that they are mostly untrue. Edmond himself ordered that they should be published in 1916. We were then in the midst of the war, and the Académie Goncourt availed itself of this excuse. After the war we were told that, had he been alive, he would have wished to give a further period of grace to his prospective victims. There was a reprieve, and as I write, in 1928, after various recommendations of the Académie, fortified by Ministerial decisions, the Journal is still concealed. One wonders what dynamite is concealed in these papers. Or is it, perhaps, all a hoax?

Nor is the indiscreet Journal the only document denied to the public. Letters addressed to the brothers are also deposited in the Bibliothèque Nationale. One day Dr. Jacques Zola and Mme. Leblond, formerly Denise Zola, son and daughter of the novelist, demanded letters addressed by Emile Zola to the Goncourts for publication. Their request was for a long time refused, but finally the law compelled the Goncourtisanes to give way. Thirty boxes of letters—from Victor Hugo, from Sainte-Beuve, from Taine, from Flaubert, from Renan, from Maupassant, as well as from Zola—have been placed with the Journal in the Enfer—the Hell, as the quarter reserved for dangerous works is called—of the National Library.

"The Journal cannot be published," explained Rosny, puckering up his wrinkled bearded face, "because there would be a multiplicity of law suits. As for the correspondence, anybody who judges himself offended can take action." His deep-lined forehead clouded. Rosny's face is angular—angular eyebrows, angular nose, high cheek bones, and a scraggy beard running to a point. Since he has had charge of these papers, his face has grown thinner and the wrinkles are more heavily scored.

I am told that Zola was treated with particular rigour by Edmond de Goncourt. Zola used to frequent the Grenier Goncourt—the so-called "attic," filled with bibelots—as did Alphonse Daudet, Rodenbach, Mallarmé, Huysmans, Jean Lorrain; but while Daudet with his charming manners was truly welcome, Zola was regarded with antipathy. Those who remember the reunions of the 'eighties assert that Goncourt scowled at the approach of Zola, and barely shook hands with him. His detestation was complete—he detested the writer, whom he accused of having largely profited by his labours, he detested the man of liberal ideas, of plebeian appearance, for

Goncourt himself was aristocratic, and, to use the favourite French word, reactionary.

Rosny has dwelt upon this unfriendliness. He has depicted Zola as undistinguished in appearance, melancholy and ugly. So fat was Zola that "to make room for his stomach, he seated himself with his legs apart on the edge of his chair." Behind his glasses his little brown eyes were singularly unobservant. He pronounced badly—in his mouth "s" became "f". Moreover, neither Daudet nor Goncourt had any general ideas, whereas Zola was extremely logical, and could always get the better of them in discussion. Zola was looked upon as "the leader of the Naturalists"—a title which Goncourt considered belonged to himself.

Open accusations of plagiarism were frequently launched against Zola. It is true that he methodically collected information from every possible source, and in his documentation doubtless took anything which could serve his purpose from his contemporaries. He invented little—yet he was hailed by the public as original; and his large earnings aroused envy. Zola was an unhappy man; he was always pessimistic; and when 200,000 copies of his latest work had been sold he would lament: "Nobody reads me, nobody understands me."

Not long ago I made a pilgrimage to the house at Médan where the school of Naturalism was founded. Doubtless Gustave Flaubert, with his "Madame Bovary," began the Realist movement, but the stream divided itself into three branches—the Impressionism of the Goncourts, the Sentimental Realism of Daudet, and the Naturalism of Zola. Around Zola rallied all the younger men, and they set themselves to describe, with the utmost seriousness, the most banal incidents of organic life. Zola himself was saved by his fine civic sense, but some of his disciples were frankly disgusting. When "La Terre" appeared in serial form, five of the best known writers of the period, Gustave Guiches, Paul Margueritte, Lucien Descaves, Rosny, and Paul Bontemps, suddenly broke away. They published the notorious Manifeste des Cinq. In it they declared that the observation of Zola was superficial, his devices out of date, his narration vulgar, and his descriptions horrible.

The wheel turns. The Master was then denounced by his disciples. Now, twenty-five years after his death, those same disciples went, in pious pilgrimage, to the house at Médan, publicly to recant. That house, close to Paris, is a calm retreat surrounded by verdure. We went there on an autumn day; the leaves were red and brown and carpeted the ground; in the

distance were little hills; a passing train broke the silence. It seemed incredible that a quarter of a century had passed since, as a young man, I was unspeakably shocked by the news that, in his Paris abode, in the rue de Bruxelles, Zola had been found dead and Mme. Zola in a grave condition. There had been an escape of gas during the night. Was it an accident? Was Zola weary of life? The theory of suicide has never been justified and was soon dismissed. Mme. Zola recovered, dying only a few years ago. She left the Médan house to be used as a *crèche*, and there, where Zola wrote Fecondité, are fifty little foundlings.

The Five tried to make reparation for the injustice they had committed. Descaves, who had not previously joined the pilgrims to Médan, courageously confessed his error and the error of his comrades—an error committed in the ardour and blindness of youth. He explained that he became reconciled with Zola during the Dreyfus Affair, in which the author of J'Accuse fought on the side of Right, and was, to avoid imprisonment, compelled to take refuge in England.

I like the French fashion of perpetuating the memory of great men. Every year the admirers of one who has made an impression on his generation assemble around his statue, at the Sorbonne, or at his house, and speeches are made, and poems are recited, and often the ceremony terminates in a simple luncheon . . . Médan is reached after a short walk from the little station of Villennes. Numerous are the pilgrims. They do not necessarily share the æsthetic or social opinions of Zola—imitators and disciples are a veritable plague in literature as in all the arts—but they pay homage to the unique work he honestly accomplished.

The imitators and disciples of Zola were small men. Those who had real talent separated themselves from him. Guy de Maupassant never truly belonged to the Médan group: he aimed at clarity and action. Octave Mirbeau, with his bitter talent, stood apart. Joris Karl Huysmans turned to religion, followed the procession at Saint-Sulpice, candle in hand, and eventually found refuge in the Trappist Monastery of Ligugé.

It is curious that some men provoke controversy not only during their lifetime but long afterwards. With all his faults, which are obvious enough, Zola is still regarded as an apostle in many literary circles in France, while in other circles he is treated with contempt. It is amusing for example to hear Léon Daudet: "Zola was as flat as a pavement by the side of a muddy gutter. His conversation was absolutely banal. He had not the

smallest erudition. He chiefly developed the olfactory sense. His style, if one can call it a style, smells of the prison and the hospital." This of course is a verdict which Daudet hastens to contrast with his verdict on Edmond de Goncourt—"an aristocrat, a man of the Eighteenth Century, an exquisite friend with a sentiment of the beautiful and the voluptuous, such as was cultivated in the time of Watteau and of Fragonard."

Rosny is one of the chief survivors of the Goncourt-Alphonse Daudet-Zola epoch. The younger men are in a hurry. They push their elders aside. Rosny takes it philosophically. "The newcomers since the war," he explained, "advance much more quickly than we did. But literary fame comes and goes. The pre-war writers mount and descend. Anatole France, Pierre Loti, René Boylesve died in full glory. Then they slumped. But they will return. Paul Bourget, who was beginning to be neglected before the war, is now commanding greater esteem than ever. Victor Margueritte was almost forgotten till he suddenly broke all French records by the sale of his later books. Henri Duvernois has at last come into his own. Pierre Mille is in the ascendant. Jules Romains' success is recent. André Gide was the center of a little circle—now he is actually becoming popular. What about Paul Valéry, obscure until a few years ago? René Bazin and Claude Farrère are more read than ever. Marcel Prévost has renewed his youth. So has the Comtesse de Noailles. Maurice Donnay and Tristan Bernard are again frequently played. Still, it is true that young writers are more talked about than older writers, and some publishers concentrate their efforts on the search for unknown authors whom they can boost into fame. The war widened the breach between the generations."

Rosny pleasantly admits that he has never been able to specialise. Versatility was permitted to Renaissance writers. They aimed at universality. Now one must standardise one's wares. The public must be able to put a distinctive label on its favourites. Since in 1886 he presented "Nell Horn" to Edmond de Goncourt, he has dabbled in many *genres*—prehistoric themes, imaginative science, the drab life of the suburbs. He has been a precursor in a number of fields since exploited by English and American authors.

Edmond de Goncourt died at Champrosa in July 1896. His testament was immediately attacked. It was held to be contrary to the public interest to allow an academy to be founded which would be in opposition to the Académie Française. If the precedent was admitted, could not any millionaire found a little

academy? The relatives of Goncourt endeavoured to upset the will. It is not generally known that Raymond Poincaré, the future President of the Republic, was the lawyer who defended the Académie Goncourt. He won his case. But the relatives appealed. Naturally the chansonniers in the café-concerts mercilessly mocked the new academy. Before it was confirmed in its functions Alphonse Daudet died. Not until 1903 was the academy legally constituted. Huysmans was the first President—it appeared that he was the eldest of the group though he was born only a few days before Octave Mirbeau. But Huysmans was nearing his end, while Mirbeau died during the war.

Recently I went to walk in the cloisters in which the author of La Cathédrale (that majestic description of Chartres) had paced when he renounced the vain pomps and quarrels of literature. The monastery is situated in a remote corner of Poitou, near a stream in well-wooded country. The steeple of the little village church emerged from a sea of trees. I found my way to the barred and bolted abode of silence to which Huysmans, once so articulate, retired. After a long wait an old woman—much beyond the canonical age—peeped around the heavy door.

I was accompanied by ladies. She threw up her hands in horror. She could hardly speak for shame. Before there could even be any parley the ladies must be sent far away from the precincts of the monastery lest some whiff of their perfume should corrupt the poor monks.

The place was in repair. I visited such parts of it as were allowed, and there, in the Trappist Monastery of Ligugé, thought sadly of the man who had progressed from mournful sensuality to satanism and the cult of black magic, from which he rose to the summits of Christian mysticism.

Octave Mirbeau was the most irascible of men. His accusations against those whom he disliked were of the most extravagant character. But he was just as extravagantly tender. Georges Clemenceau, I recall, spoke to me with rare affection of Mirbeau. When Mirbeau aided anybody, writer or artist, he did so in no halfhearted way. Claude Monet, Maurice Maeterlinck, Marguerite Audoux, for whose "Marie-Claire" he wrote a preface, owed much to him.

Marguerite Audoux was a little seamstress. Her book was beautiful in its simplicity. Anything more opposed to the style of Mirbeau it would be hard to conceive. Yet the mischievous

tongues of Paris at once pretended that Mirbeau had really written the book out of friendship for the little seamstress.

During the war he grumbled incessantly. He attacked the politicians. He considered Joffre to be the last word in incompetence—his epithets were comically picturesque: "an old mussel," "an old canary," "an old barrel."

Rosny relates, in his interesting memoirs, a dinner in the house of Monet at Giverny. Mirbeau came, twisted and bent with rheumatism. "The Grand Duke Nicholas!" he cried: "do you really believe in the Russian steam-roller? I know the Grand Duke—he is a mere andouille. When he was presented to Guitry I heard him say 'Oh yes, the great dramatic author. I know your pieces, your fine pieces, your superb pieces. Ah, I forget the names. I have no memory for titles. And what a dénouement! Admirable! Remind me of the beginning. I have no memory for beginnings.' So spoke the Grand Duke Nicholas with a perfectly idiotic air. I will never believe that such a man is capable of commanding millions of soldiers."

In his books Dingo, Le Jardin des Supplices, Les Mémoires d'Une Femme de Chambre, there is astonishing verve: he is ferocious and humorous; he is outrageously cruel and excessively sentimental; in his invectives there is a sort of frenzy.

Elémir Bourges, whom I often saw in the Latin Quarter, where he lived, passed his days in the Bibliothèque Nationale —where at least it was warmer than in his room. He always wore several woollen waistcoats. When he sat down to dinner he kept his overcoat on. Bourges composed slowly and "La Nef," and "Les Oiseaux S'Envolent et Les Fleurs Tombent," are without passion. Then there was Paul Margueritte, who for some time collaborated with his brother Victor, whose picture of the post-war French girl, La Garçonne, afterwards created an unprecedented scandal. The Margueritte were connected with the family of Stéphane Mallarmé, and it is said that Paul would have married Mallarmé's daughter had not the poet declined to accept for a son-in-law a man who not only wrote a pantomime but played in it at the Théâtre Libre. "He will end up at the Folies-Bergère!" exclaimed Mallarmé. Of his unhappy married life much has been written. He asked for a divorce, and then, changing his mind, forgave his wife. The sequel was unfortunate—as might have been expected. But since he had forgiven, a second divorce suit was legally impossible.

Gustave Geffroy who recently died was the Director of the Gobelins Tapestry factory. He had a genius for friendships.

He was equally the friend of Goncourt, Zola, Daudet, Clemenceau, Monet, Eugène Carrière, Auguste Rodin.

Lucien Descaves lived in my own quarter—Montparnasse. His "Sous-Offs"—savagely anti-militarist—is perhaps his only book of real talent. He could not bear to be defeated, and for many years refused to attend the meetings of the Ten.

Among those who were subsequently elected to the Academy as vacancies occurred was Jules Renard. Jules Renard whose pathetic "Poil de Carotte" is a masterpiece, and whose "Histories Naturelles" are truly delicious, was extremely poor and his election was his salvation. His "Journal" which has recently been published is filled with fine observation. Yet he wrote painfully and slowly. When he felt that he was dying he said to his wife: "My poor Marinette, for the first time since we have been together, I am going to inflict upon you a great grief."

One woman was elected to the Academy—Judith Gautier. She was already old, living with her monkeys, her bibelots (Chinese, Hindu, and prehistoric) and her cats. The daughter of Théophile Gautier, she had many anecdotes to relate about Victor Hugo, about Théodore de Banville, about Wagner. Among my friends in Paris were two English women, Miss Mabel and Miss Ethel Duncan, who participated in the literary life of the epoch, and were close friends of Judith Gautier. It was always a pleasure, in their spacious apartment by the quiet Place Saint-Sulpice, to listen to their stories of the vivacious old lady, and to observe that veneration for genius is still possible in our days.

Jean Ajalbert, the Director of Malmaison and afterwards of the Beauvais Tapestry Works, was an enormous man always ready for battle. "Who is the best trencherman of this Academy?" a reporter once asked Drouant. And the restaurant-keeper replied: "Ajalbert eats more than any one. Every time it is a matter of astonishment for me to see the way he cleans up plate after plate."

Henri Céard, one of the earliest Naturalists elected to the Academy, rendered his colleagues the service of reading the unpublished Goncourt Journal. His report concluded that publication was impossible. Lastly there are Raoul Ponchon and Léon Daudet of whom I have already written.

Chapter XXVI

SOME NOTABLE FRENCH WOMEN

FRENCH women have not yet obtained the vote but if anyone supposes that they do not count in French life he is vastly mistaken. They are in ordinary daily existence more important than the men in France. Their efficiency is proverbial. It is not, however, of the ordinary French woman that I would write here: I cannot conclude this book about a cityful of celebrities without referring to some of the celebrated women I have seen in Paris. If I were to refer to them all I would begin another volume. Moreover, there are scattered throughout these pages many passages on women. Merely as a matter of convenience do I gather up a few impressions which I record separately.

Women writers have always been conspicuous in French literature. One has only to think of Madame de Sévigné whose lively but correct style is perhaps the best model of how the French language may be manipulated. Madame de Staël is another name which comes to mind. And when the French *bas bleus* are not writers themselves, they inspire writers. I suppose that France, from the days of Ninon de Lenclos to our own days, has produced more Ægerias than any other country. In the Nineteenth Century, George Sand whose friendship with Alfred de Musset is still a favourite topic of littérateurs, and Marcelline Desbordes-Valmore, who lived unhappily, are the outstanding women writers. Then came Juliette Adam, and Gyp (Comtesse de Martel) and Séverine, sometimes described as the first woman journalist, and Rachilde. There followed a flood of feminine talent mostly expressed through the novel, mostly romantic in character. Among the women writers are Mesdames Gérard d'Houville, Colette, Marcelle Tinayre, Lucie Delarue-Mardrus, Myriam Harry, and the Comtesse de Noailles, the principal French poetess.

Nor is it only in literature that women have taken a prominent place. Far off in my boyhood I was thrilled by the golden voice, the fiery acting, of Sarah Bernhardt (the Divine Sarah, as the French called her) but it was not until she was already old and I had myself advanced in life and had left behind the enthusiasms of youth that I was privileged to meet her.

During the war she underwent a dangerous operation—the

amputation of a leg. She was far from her native land. Reports succeeded each other, representing her to be dying. I was asked to write an appreciation of her. Reluctantly did I undertake the task. There surged in on me memories of her incomparable acting in Rostand's "L'Aiglon" and in Racine's "Phèdre." Nobody ever touched audiences to the quick as she touched them. I wrote what I could. Happily she lingered, and then rallied, and finally we were cheered by the news that Sarah Bernhardt, with her extraordinary vitality, had miraculously recovered. I like to think that my article helped.

Still moved by this experience, I met her on her return to Paris. I had long ceased to be troubled in the presence of greatness, but now I did indeed tremble. Here was the woman who had depicted passion as, I imagine, nobody else. I was afraid of seeing a poor broken creature, who had lost everything. To my astonishment she was as animated as ever. Certainly she was confined to her chair, but her hands were eloquent, her dark eyes were full of strange fires, her voice was lovely with its mellow contralto tones. That meeting was one of the supreme moments of my life.

She lived, when in Paris, in a beautiful home on the Boulevard Périere. (When she wanted to escape from the whirl of the town she retired to Bell-Ile off the Brittany coast.) There she sat in a high straight-backed carved oak throne, probably once an old bishop's stall in some cathedral; and her head lay against the Gothic panelling. She wore a stately dress of crimson velvet fringed with lambskin, from which emerged folds of delicate lace. The place was filled with the splendid tributes of her admirers and with the artistic treasures she had collected. One room was devoted to portraits and statues, many of herself, railed off by a wrought-iron grille.

She was, in spite of her immense earnings, often financially embarrassed; and she continued to play to the end. What had she not done? She had, since the day on which she slammed the door of the Comédie Française behind her, appeared in classical plays, in romantic plays, in historical plays, in Parisian comedy and in melodrama, always displaying amazing virtuosity and energy. She was Zanetto in Le Passant, Dona Sol in Hernani, Zemma in Nana-Sahib, Roxane in Cyrano. She was the heroine of La Dame aux Camelias and La Princesse Lointaine and in L'Aiglon she was superb.

What was the secret of Sarah Bernhardt? Charm is not all the art of the actor, but it is a quality which, I learnt from her, is indispensable. Without charm all the rest is vain. One

may possess every other quality, physical and moral, and yet never reach the topmost heights for lack of charm. A good memory, a well-proportioned figure, a rich voice, a perfect enunciation, an appropriate command of gesture, natural talents improved by sound instruction, will-power and perseverance, and the most exquisite sensibility will not suffice. There must be added that indefinable something which is called charm.

When Sarah Bernhardt was over seventy-five years of age and was still regularly appearing on the stage she wrote novels "to amuse herself." But she also wished to leave a book which would be useful to her successors. In what she was pleased to call her spare time, she dictated voluminously—observations, advice, reminiscences, pell-mell. Throughout she insisted on the need of charm. She expressed herself in a variety of ways, but the refrain is constant.

"There is," she said, "the *je ne sais quoi* which holds the attention of the public. For want of the right word this *je ne sais quoi* has been called charm. It is necessary to have charm to reach the pinnacle. Charm is made of everything and of nothing. There is the combative will, the expression, the deportment, the proportions of the figure, the sound of the voice, the grace of gestures. There is no need to be handsome or pretty—but there must be charm. This charm has different manifestations. There is charm which imposes itself by feline grace and is made of happy movements; charm which takes possession of you by the music of the voice; charm which emanates from a person with a clean and loyal soul; charm not less captivating of a complex and subtle intelligence; poetic charm which is the most deceptive, for it is only a light covering of material blemishes; the charm of a healthy and gay person—but that is the least durable."

The art of the theatre is, protested Sarah Bernhardt, more difficult than any other art. It requires so many physical advantages before it can be exercised at all. A trivial defect may be fatal. Thus Coquelin regretted that he could never be the great tragedian which otherwise he might have been, because he had a snub nose. An actor, however, can usually contrive to overcome such obstacles by make-up. In this he is better favoured than the actress. But beauty may be a hindrance. One *débutante*, extremely beautiful, with a magnificent voice and indisputable talent, failed completely because her body was too long and her limbs too short. A little *maquillage* will correct faults of feature, but it is essential that the stature shall

be harmonious. Sarah Bernhardt was excessively slim, but she nevertheless produced an impression of harmony.

Memory may play queer tricks. Mounet-Sully could remember verse but not prose. De Max, who had a treacherous memory, learnt his parts by constant reading—he visualized the words. Most actors learn by the ear. Réjane had a perfect memory. Sarah Bernhardt was word-perfect after reading a play two or three times, but the day she ceased to play a piece she forgot her rôle entirely. She could never remember two or three parts. If she happened to be playing "Phèdre" she could not recall a tirade of "Hamlet."

"The most extraordinary memory I have ever known," she said, "was that of Gambetta. One evening when I was dining in his company he asked me to recite some verses of Victor Hugo: 'Shall we repeat Hernani together?' I replied: 'I do not recollect the rôle of Dona Sol. I learnt it at the Conservatoire but—' He laughed: 'What! you do not know those magnificent verses which you learnt four years ago? Well, I learnt the whole piece, and I will recite it.' He repeated the whole of the first act without omitting or distorting a single verse. He then recited 'Ruth et Boaz,' beginning with the last word of the last verse, and reciting it backwards, not verse by verse, but word by word. He knew all Hugo and all Ossian in this manner."

The golden voice of Sarah Bernhardt was one of the principal factors of her success. No wonder she attached great importance to it. Rachel had an ample and profound voice but without any lighter notes, and was thus unable to play in comedy. The voice is modified every three or four years and often the timbre changes. Young artists should beware of the temptation to produce mere sound. It is only one of the qualities which are required, and it is foolish to sacrifice everything to sonority.

"The most beautiful voice I heard in my interminable career was that of Soldini, the great Italian actor. It was a full orchestra. Fury, douleur, and appeasement glided into glacial irony, and all these manifestations were modulated in such manner that it was impossible to observe the bridge which united them. Another marvellous voice was that of Lucien Guitry."

She paid a generous tribute to Lucien Guitry, whom she described as the greatest comedian of our epoch. Nobody has played and nobody will play like him the rôle of Flambeau in "L'Aiglon."

"I who had the great joy of having him for partner listened to him passionately: his art is incomparable. . . . He is the

finest model that one can recommend to the younger generation."

An actor should be able to recite four verses, or twenty-six words at least, without taking a new breath. There was a celebrated professor, a Sociétaire of the Comédie-Française, M. Talbot, "who gave me good counsels, but who towards the end of his career became a little strange. He made his pupils lie on their back and put upon their stomach the marble of the mantelpiece, saying: 'Now breathe, and recite your part.'"

Henry Irving she regarded as a wonderful artist, but a poor actor. His articulation was faulty. But his taste was perfect and he mounted his plays with exceptional ability. It is thanks to him that the British theatre enjoys a great renown. She compared him with Antoine, who, though not a good actor, helped to renovate the French theatre.

Should the actor let himself go or should he retain full possession of himself? Sarah Bernhardt unreservedly believed that the artist should feel the emotions which he is representing. She told an amusing story of Coquelin who remained so cold that whenever he was on the stage for a few moments without anything to say he went soundly to sleep behind the backs of the figurants. It was the duty of a young actor who was specially attached to him to waken him at the right moment; and he then sprang, refreshed, to immediate action! Such methods were not for Sarah Bernhardt. If the public is to be moved the actor must first be moved.

"One must love, weep, suffer, and die . . . It has sometimes taken me more than an hour to come back to life. I have felt the brain enfeebled, the heart scarcely beating, the breast without breath. . . . Not for a moment must the public think that the events on the stage have not happened. We must keep it in the ambience into which the author has sought to transport it. We must create the atmosphere by our sincerity, and the public, lost and breathless, must not reconquer its free will until the fall of the curtain."

Louise Abbéma, a great friend of Sarah Bernhardt, I often saw. Indeed nobody who frequented the Opéra quarter could fail to encounter the grey-haired woman, clad in a tailored suit, masculine in character, and wearing a three-cornered hat. She was accompanied by a fat and ugly little dog.

Nor was she absent from the social gatherings in Paris, and she never missed a vernissage in the great picture-galleries. She lived in the rue Laffitte and liked to think of herself as the last of the *boulevardières*. Her descent she traced from Comte

Louis de Narbonne, and she was proud of being the granddaughter of the Comte Abbéma who was Ambassador of the Low Countries to the Court of France.

Painting was her profession. She chose her sitters from many ranks. When she painted Sarah Bernhardt she became famous. Afterwards she made numerous portraits of the actress. Among her subjects were Ferdinand de Lesseps, the engineer who conceived the Panama Canal. Alexandre Duval, an eccentric boulevardier who owned a score of restaurants in Paris, and Arthur Meyer, the Jewish Editor who was converted to Catholicism and became the chosen spokesman of the old nobility were among her sitters. But she also loved to paint animals and flowers, and she taught flower painting to French society girls. Like Rosa Bonheur she was decorated with the cross of the Legion of Honour.

Madame Curie I look upon as the most distinguished woman scientist. In her manners she is exceedingly simple: in appearance a very ordinary motherly person, with a care-lined face. She dresses without distinction. But she has had a wonderful career. The story of radium is the story of the joint endeavour of Pierre and Marie Curie. Pierre Curie was a young savant who turned to experimental research at Paris. In the spring of 1894 he was introduced to Marie Sklodowska. They were soon friends and thus began the most illustrious union of modern times.

She was the daughter of Polish parents, both of them teachers in the elementary schools of Warsaw. To Paris she came to study science. Pierre Curie, already making marvellous discoveries, had believed that it would never be possible to find a wife to dream his dreams with him. But in the serious intelligent Polish girl he found the wife "made expressly for him, to share all his preoccupations."

The life of the young couple was entirely consecrated to science, and so intimate was their collaboration that it is impossible to attribute to either of them the single credit for the discovery of radium.

They inhabited a small three-roomed apartment, and they carried on their researches in the old laboratories of the Collège Rollin. It was Marie Curie who in her experiments first suspected the presence of an unknown substance, and her husband thereupon interrupted his work on crystals to disengage the mysterious matter. In July 1898 they were able to announce the discovery of polonium, and in December of the same year that of radium. If their work had united them, their glory

did not separate them. To both of them was awarded the Davy Medal by the Royal Society of London, and to both of them was attributed the Prix Nobel for physics. Pierre Curie was given a chair at the Sorbonne. Marie Curie was nominated chief of the laboratory. Alas! in 1904 Pierre Curie was killed in a stupid street accident. Marie Curie succeeded him and pursued the scientific work they had begun together.

Her recent visit to the United States turned, in spite of her modest demeanour, into a triumphal tour. She was also invited to Warsaw to lay the foundation stone of the Radiology Institute. Then she went to Prague at the invitation of the Czecho-Slovak Government to undertake experiments at Joachimstal where the largest known quantities of uranium ore are found.

Two stars have come out of Poland to light the scientific world—Copernicus and Marie Sklodowska Curie.

She dislikes these personal tributes. "In science," she said, "we should be interested in things not persons." She believes "that science and peace will invincibly and inevitably triumph over ignorance and war."

In a recent national vote on the greatest women of all time and of all countries, by far the highest number of suffrages were cast for Madame Curie.

Rarely have I seen such a sweet-faced woman as Madame Séverine. Perhaps her heart sometimes ran away with her head. Often when men and women committed a political crime she forgot the victim, and appeared in the courts to make an impassioned appeal to the jury on behalf of the assassin. Often her appeal resulted in the acquittal of the criminal. One may argue that this attitude is unfortunate, and if it were generalised would result in the destruction of law and order. Yet, whatever one may think of her ideals, one cannot refuse to admire her motives, and to regard her as an Apostle of Pity.

Her pen is the instrument of a heart that knows no limits of love and sympathy. Her generous affection is all-embracing. Always am I moved when I see the angelic expression of her face, and observe her eyes suddenly flood with tears. Her white hair falls in curls over her forehead and frames her cheeks.

Madame Séverine lives in a charming cottage opposite the gigantic castle of Pierrefonds. She has adopted as her "grandchild" Bernard Lecache, a strange little man whom I used to meet in journalistic circles. His curly hair falls in long locks over his shoulder. More than anybody he has called attention to the antisemitic atrocities committed in various parts of Europe and particularly to the pogroms in Ukrainia.

Her real name is Caroline Rémy. When a girl she met Jules Vallès, the revolutionary who was then an exile in Brussels. She accepted his political ideas and fell in love with him. Then began a regular collaboration, both in exile and after his return to Paris under an amnesty. She was associated in the founding of the Cri due Peuple with Vallès and with Dr. Guebhard. Subsequently, after the death of Vallès, she married Guebhard. Soon her socialism became sentimental rather than militant, and she espoused for a time the cause of Boulanger. She interviewed all the famous men of her time. Her interview with Pope Leo XIII created a great sensation.

One incident must suffice to indicate her character. When there was an explosion of fire damp in the Saint-Etienne mine, and rescue work was exceedingly difficult, she put on miner's clothes and went down into the pits, performing prodigies of valour. Afterwards she wrote articles describing the terrible scenes and subscriptions poured in for the stricken families.

In France she fulfils a traditional rôle. Wherever there is misery or injustice, wherever men suffer for their opinions or even revolt against existing conditions, the fine face of Séverine appears, pleading with the authorities, pleading with the judges, pleading with the public for pity. She is the supreme Apostle of Pity.

Only the other day Sybille-Gabrielle-Marie-Antoinette de Riquetti de Mirabeau, Comtesse de Martel de Janville, published one more novel. "Gyp" she has called herself throughout her long literary life. More than a hundred books have come from her indefatigable pen. She seems to possess the superhuman vigour of her great-uncle Mirabeau, the most remarkable of the men who trod the stage of the Revolution. She has always shown impatience of injustice, intense human understanding, vivid personality; to exceptional powers of observation she brings a keen mind, a lively wit; and she has pictured French society inimitably. Her dialogue sparkles; it has a flavour of satire. Recently she wrote memoirs of her childhood, with a lightness of touch, a vivacity, a sympathy for youth, which made us almost forget that she is nearly eighty. As a child she lived in Brittany; but after a sojourn in Nancy she came to Paris where she has spent most of her time. "Le Petit Bob" seems to relate, in fictional form, some of her own adventures. "Le Mariage de Chiffon" will perhaps be the novel on which her reputation will rest. Once she thought of buying the château of the Mirabeaus near Aix in Provence, for her son, Aymand de Martel, but he died in North Africa after a

series of exploits as leader of Sudanese Spahis. This house was ruined; it was sold during the Revolution to a peasant. Then it was re-purchased by an adopted son of Mirabeau. Finally, it was bought by Maurice Barrès. "Gyp" is a very fine representative of the clever Frenchwoman of good family who remains all her life something of an *enfant terrible*.

I shall always think of Madame Réjane as one of the kindliest of women. She was, despite her years and her fame, always an impulsive *gamine de Paris*. Often did I see her, and I could not but fall in love with the woman who incarnated the grace, the elegance, the unexpected drollery of pre-war Paris. Her talent was concentrated in a gesture, a turn of the hand, a bright movement of the head, an attitude, a smile. She was overshadowed by the divine Sarah, and perhaps it is symbolical of her career that she obtained only a second prize at the Conservatoire. Her acting was too personal to convince the official jury. It soon conquered the public but always it was a secondary place which she enjoyed. Perhaps she did too much. She did everything and refused to be labelled. She played in revues at the Vaudeville, in dramas at the Ambigu, in comedy everywhere. She could be duchess or commère with the same ease: in every rôle she was extremely sensitive. It was curious to witness her acting the part of one of those strange creatures, sentimental, morbid, unconventional, but passionate, that Henry Bataille loved to depict; and then a little later to watch her in the part of the robust, outspoken, vulgar but good-hearted Madame Sans-Gêne.

A few months before she died there was a banquet at which Madame Réjane was the guest of honor. The President of the Republic presided. The best-known playwrights—Maurice Donnay, for example—and the greatest actors—such as Gémier—emotionally rendered homage to the beaming Réjane.

A little while afterwards I met her in vastly different surroundings. It was a tiny bookshop parlour, over-crowded, overheated. We were an insignificant little coterie of poetry-lovers. There were few whose names were known outside their own immediate circle. Yet Réjane, the great actress, then ailing, spent a long evening reading aloud the poems of a young and obscure writer. This was a characteristic action. She was never weary of encouraging *les jeunes*. She would put herself to endless trouble to help a struggling actor or author. There was no warmer hearted woman in the world than Réjane. Her career was studded with failures which not even her genius could save, because she insisted on giving many budding playwrights a

chance. Nor was there anyone who was more intensely alive. She was interested in every movement, in every aspect of French art, not preciously but in a vivid human way.

For more than two generations she was one of the brightest ornaments of the French stage. There have been other actresses who have attracted more attention, whose lives have been long adventures, who have been perpetually talked about. Réjane was never *bruyante,* was always simple, always modest.

She began as a *comédienne;* but she had many of the qualities of a tragédienne. From Henri Lavedan to Ibsen, from Victorien Sardou to Shakespeare—every kind of dramatist furnished matter for her versatile talent. The secret of *her* success was—her vivacity. She did not act—she became the character she impersonated: every crowded moment she was on the stage she lived the part and the "part" lived. In a perfectly precise sense of the phrase, she filled a rôle, filled it almost to bursting-point. Everybody who ever saw her must have been impressed with her naturalness: no *grands éclats de voix,* no declamation, no wild gestures, nothing theatrical. One saw not an actress but a woman. The illusion of life was amazing, or, rather, it was not an illusion of life—it was life itself. At the presentation of Henry Bataille's "L'Amazone," for example, I saw hardened playgoers silently weeping. As "Maman Colibri" she was incomparable.

There are few French playwrights of the last forty years who have not written for her. Jean Richepin, Paul Hervieu, Brieux, Romain Coolus, Edmond About, Dumas fils, Halévy, de Porto-Riche, Henry Bernstein—but why continue? Who would not figure in the list? In London and New York she was best known for her impersonation of Madame Sans-Gêne, which old playgoers will not have forgotten. In Paris she continually went back to the Sardou piece in which she won her greatest popular success.

Unquestionably the Comtesse Mathieu de Noailles is the greatest living woman poet of France. She is extraordinarily beautiful, with delicately chiselled features, large brooding eyes; and her frail figure has the charm of a flower. France still boasts that it defends the clear flame of Greco-Roman culture against the nebulous speculations of the Germanic and Slavic North. Pierre Ronsard traced his descent from Rumania. André Chénier belonged racially to Greece. Jean Moréas was an authentic Greek. Madame de Noailles is at once Rumanian and Greek in origin. She was Princess Anna de Brancovan, daughter of the Rumanian Prince Bibesco, and she married the French bearer

of one of the oldest aristocratic names. Her husband shares her interest in poetry and their salon attracts literary workers.

She stands for ideals, but there is in her poetry a touch of sadness—she sings of love but she sings also of death. The titles of her books are themselves splendid poetic phrases—Le Coeur Innombrable; Les Eblouissements; Les Forces Eternelles; L'Honneur de Couffrir. Her poems express an Eastern paganism: the delight of living in this earth of flowers and trees, of delectable sights and sweet perfumes. Yet she is haunted by the inevitable end. The nostalgia of the classical lands of the Eastern Mediterranean obsesses her. The isles of Greece emerge, gorgeous and glowing from the dark blue sea. The Turkish minarets stand up like candles in the moonlight of the Bosphorus. Odours from Persian rose-gardens are borne on soft winds to the fountains of Damascus.

Her verse is musical and fluid, it is full of a marvellous disorder as of jewels heaped and glittering. Constantly one is startled by an image, surprised by a thought. The phrases are alive and the words unexpected.

But this does not mean that the Comtesse de Noailles searches for novelty and strange effects. She does not desire to revolutionize French poetry as do most of the younger French poets. She is content to give a classical form to what she writes; for her the *rythme intérieur* alone may be modified. She has, in fact, found a music that is veritably her own. But outwardly the verses have the same shape as the verses of her predecessors.

Yet even in those so-called advanced circles where nothing counts but novelty, the Comtesse de Noailles is accepted as the Queen of French Poetry, in spite of her refusal to desert her academic models. There would seem, for example, to be little in common between Jean Cocteau and the Comtesse de Noailles, but they nevertheless express the greatest admiration for the works of each other.

The truth is that, while a departure from the accepted rules and the elaboration of personal theories may attract some attention, the present tendency in France is to escape from the fashion of eccentricity that has reigned for some years. Schools which sprang up in such numbers, each of them armed with a manifesto which was hurled at the head of a long-suffering public, are disappearing. There is a return to what the late President Harding called "normalcy." Even those who begin their career as banner-bearers of a little group, soon throw aside their banner. Thus most of the Dadaists who, a few years ago, proclaimed war on the past and aimed at something which owed

nothing to what had gone before; have now renounced Dadaism and have become orthodox writers. Even the Symbolists have forgotten that they are Symbolists, and have become simply poets.

Doubtless groups will continue to be founded and individuals will endeavour to "épater le bourgeois," but the main current is towards Classicism in form and Modernism in content. One must express oneself according to one's own temperament, but there is not the smallest reason why the tradition of the language should be ignored.

Though the Comtesse de Noailles, belonging to the French aristocracy, is to be encountered at most of the social functions of the French capital, she does not hold herself aloof from popular artistic fêtes; and I have seen her preside over the most democratic dinner imaginable—a dinner organised by a club of which the members are mostly working men and women. The abolition of class distinction is one of the most admirable traits of France where democracy is a real thing and not a pretence.

She confessed that the modern poet who has most influenced her is Francis Jammes, but the books which she wrote before she knew the work of Francis Jammes show, strangely enough, even more of the manner of that poet than her later works. She is often regarded as a Romanticist because of the vivid imagination which inspires all that she has done, but she refuses this title, and declares that when she reads her own verses she thinks rather of Theocritus.

At the age of five she wrote her earliest poems; at the age of fifteen she published her first book.

Rachilde lives in the old rue de Condé near the Luxembourg Gardens. One hundred and fifty years ago Beaumarchais lived there, and wrote the Barber of Seville. Rachilde is, in private life, Madame Alfred Vallette, wife of the founder of the Mercure de France; and on Tuesdays she gathers round her men and women distinguished in literature and in art. In her daring youth this silver-haired woman would often don male attire. She was sometimes called Monsieur Rachilde and sometimes—Maurice Barrès started the fashion—Mademoiselle Baudelaire. Her novels were exceptionally virile, and she liked to give paradoxical names to them. There was, for example, Monsieur Vénus. The contents of that book were audacious for the epoch. The heroine had masculine habits and adopted a male inferior whom she tried to feminise. I re-read the book the other day, and it seemed somewhat artificial. But at the time it was

published it created a tremendous stir. Certainly there is nothing unhealthy about the appearance of Rachilde. She consorted as an equal with men like Huysmans, Verlaine, Moréas, Paul and Victor Margueritte, Camille Flammarion, the popular astronomer, Mallarmé, Laurent-Tailhade and Oscar Wilde.

She relates how she paid her first visit to Victor Hugo. Somebody informed her that it was the custom to kneel before Hugo when one was introduced. She did so and Hugo laughed heartily, helping her to her feet.

The story is often told that, overhearing Moréas abuse Hugo, she went over to him and soundly boxed his ears. Moréas was then at the height of his renown, and everybody was indignant with Rachilde. It was Moréas who intervened to protect her.

She also tells of Barbey d'Aurevilly, author of Les Diaboliques. He was then, in his latter days, living in poverty, surrounded by Angora cats. He was in a red dressing-gown, his cheeks rouged, his hair dyed. Throughout the meal which she took with him he continually painted and powdered himself.

Once when Verlaine was homeless she placed her room at his disposal and went to stay with her mother. She visited him every morning to make chocolate for him. But alas! she afterwards discovered that the poet sent regularly for the absinthe without which he could not exist.

Of Alfred Jarry, the author of Ubu-Roi, another victim of alcohol, she has many anecdotes. He used to dress in cycling costume, and an immense overcoat, whose pockets had always great holes in them. He carried a small library in this overcoat but when he tried to find a book he was obliged to plunge his hand to the bottom of the lining.

Madame Colette—Mme. de Jouvenel—is one of the most remarkable women in France. She has written poignant novels which are supposed to be in part based upon her own experiences. She has written delicious Animal Dialogues. She has appeared in the music-halls, and she has acted in her own plays. In everything she has done she has put herself. She is the most subjective of French writers, and describes the most subtle, the most profound sensations, without disguise, without detachment, without intellectual transposition. Everything is simple, clear, warm, and quivering. She writes as the rivers flow, as the flowers bloom, and her aspirations, her joys, and her sufferings are revealed. With Willy (Gauthier-Villars) who was her husband, she collaborated in the Claudine series—Claudine at School, Claudine at Paris, Claudine Married: the story of the young modern girl who loves liberty, who demands

space and movement, who despises danger, who, in a word, would live her own life. In Les Vrilles de la Vigne she is troubled by the incompatibility of so-called social duties and marital duties.

"The trouble with you society women is that you can't live any way you like," the heroine tells her tired-out, pale-faced visitor. "You have husbands who take you out to dinner, after the theatre—but you also have children and maids, who drag you out of bed in the morning. You have supper, at the Café de Paris, next to Mlle. Xaverine de Choisy—or whatever her name may be—and you leave the restaurant at the same time she does. But Mlle. de Choisy, when she gets home, calls her maid and says: 'I'm going to sleep till two o'clock in the afternoon, and mind that nobody bothers me before that time!' Having slept nine full hours, Mlle. de Choisy wakes up fresh and full of spirits, and starts out for the Rue de la Paix, where she meets you, who have been up since half-past eight in the morning, with sunken cheeks and dark rings around your eyes. And your husband, next evening at dinner, compares the freshness of Mlle. de Choisy with your fatigue. No woman in the world can stand the daily fatigue which society women and mothers of families impose upon themselves."

Chéri and La Fin de Chéri are particularly illuminating confessions. But all that she writes is a confession. Each volume is a collection of tender and fragile confidences on life and love, on men and women, on animals and flowers. She lives on the edge of Auteuil, looking on the Bois. Almost, one is in the country: there is a walled garden filled with fragrant herbs and flowers. "I could not live without growing things," she says. "I must have roses and dogs." A busy impulsive woman, who has many foibles, who is a creature of her instincts, who does not know how to pretend, or how to escape from her temperament, she is a modern woman with all that the description implies of happiness and unhappiness.

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So here they are, my men and women, many more than the fifty men and women of Robert Browning, men and women who have lived and worked in the great throbbing city of Paris. They are representative, even if they are exceptional. They are only a few even of those whose names occur to me as I write at random, only a few of those who remain in my memory. They must, at least for the moment, suffice. What a teeming world of valour and endeavour! Browning's words

again come back to me, as I set down these swift impressions in my high studio overlooking the hundred monuments of Paris:

The house for me, no doubt, were a house in the city square.
Ah, such a life, such a life, as one leads at the window there!
Something to see, by Bacchus, something to hear at least;
There, the whole day long, one's life is a perfect feast.
Bang, wang, wang, goes the drum; tootle te tootle, the fife;
Oh, a day in the city square, there is no such pleasure in life!

It has been my lot to move among these men and women, listening to stories about them, sometimes listening to their confessions, reading their books, looking on their pictures, observing them, interesting myself in them, thrilling to their achievements, vibrating to their defeats, making in some sense their life my life. Life is good everywhere, because of its variety, but particularly is it good when it is spent amid this Cityful of Celebrities.

THE END